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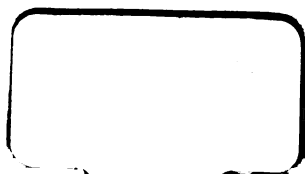


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Inaugural-Essay

On the Portrayal of the Life and Character of Lord Byron
in the Novel by B. Disraeli entitled „Venetia“

for obtaining the Degree

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to

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of the

University of Leipzig.

Even if the work which forms the subject of the present essay were not written by one, who in the latter years of his life, completely turned the current of English thought, and so thoroughly gained a mastery over the minds of the people, that to the last day of his mortal career he wielded almost supreme power in England, and directed the political affairs of that nation according to his pleasure: the tale itself is so well handled, and like much of the English literature the various scenes are so graphically brought before the reader that it must repay the perusal of even the most critical.

In 1837 the year in which the author published it, having as Liberal or rather Radical, solicited the assistance of O'Connell he had suddenly gone over to the Tory party, and acted on this occasion in such a manner, as most naturally to call forth the bitterest and well merited reproach. Notwithstanding the brilliancy and dash of the young aspirant for political honours, who rivalled all his companions in foppery and love of display, no one foresaw even the slightest probability of his attaining at any time that success which afterwards fell to his lot. This must be borne in mind, as well as the changes which the views on literary productions undergo, in the course of a few years; in considering the criticisms which were then offered upon this work.

For the reasons above mentioned it came before the public with very little notice. The „Gentleman's Magazine“ does not refer to it. Even the „Quarterly Review“ has not considered it worthy of an article. I will therefore at once proceed to consider the remarks which we find upon the novel in the Edinburgh Review for Oct. 1837.

Though there may be much exaggeration in the words of Byron respecting the Edinburgh Reviewers; that „it would, indeed require a Hercules to crush the Hydra“, it appears that they as well as many others of the same profession lay great stress upon the motto which heads their periodical: „Judex damnatur cum

nocens absolvitur": and not only surpass the truth therein contained, but act upon the suggestion proposed by Demosthenes (*Περὶ τοῦ Στεγάνου*) "ἔτερον δ', ὃ φύσει πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ὑπάρχει, τῶν μὲν λαιδορῶν καὶ τῶν κατηγοριῶν ἀκούειν ἡδέως, τοῖς ἐπαινοῦσι δ' αὐτοὺς ἄχθεσθαι."

Respecting the other consideration the shifting of the model by which the works of each age are judged I remark that there are certain characteristics which never change, although too many are subject to the unbending hand of fashion. No changes in style can take away the gentle flow and easy picturing of Marmontel in his work on. „*Les Incas*“ or mar the simple narration of Silvio Pellico or the spirited accounts of Manzoni. There is a lasting interest in the homely chat of Erckmann Chatrian, and the household accounts in „*Un philosophe sous les toits*“, the humour of Hauff, the development of the plot in the works of Gustav Freytag, the rambling tales of Hackländer; the wild and exciting but flowing romances of Dumas and many others: not to mention the greater works of Dante, Milton, Fenelon which cannot be ranked in the same class with our novel. I shall therefore remark upon the sentiments expressed in the Edinburgh Review, quite disregarding the length of time which has elapsed since the article for Oct. 1837 was written

Although they are very sweeping and emphatic, they are somewhat desultory; and although many of the suggestions to the author of „*Venetia*“ might be very acceptable they proceed a little too far, and are much too dogmatic. We might in many instances apply the very words of the reviewers to their review of the work. For instance the first sentence is „These are works of more than ordinary pretensions“ which might be slightly altered to: This is a criticism of more than ordinary pretensions. And when we read the following sentence, in which the whole seems brought to a climax: „— — — — — we doubt whether, even with all proper appliances, Mr. D'Israeli could produce a really good work of fiction;“ we are reminded of the well merited, and salutary article of 1808 pouring contempt upon the youthful productions of Byron, although notwithstanding all their faults even Sir Walter Scott and many eminent men found something in them to commend. The advice however therein contained to give up the thought of writing poetry as well as many similar suggestions, the unparalleled fame of the poet in after life proved to be unfounded.

The words „Were we to say that in these bold attempts Mr. D'Israeli — — — — — has entirely failed“, certainly imply that there has been something very nearly approaching a failure.

This cannot be admitted, although the novel under consideration is generally acknowledged not to be one of the best, which its author has written, and this is indirectly brought out in the review before us. Wherein the author with all his acknowledged merits is supposed to have failed is not very clearly defined: but collecting the scattered remarks of the reviewers we may classify them and consider them under three heads.

I. Has he faithfully portrayed the character of Byron, and as far as was appropriate to the story that of Shelley?

II. Is the style, the plot, and the handling of the subject successful?

III. Is the choice of subject unhappy and to be reprehended?

I. The reviewers imply that they must give to the first question an answer in the negative. As one of the main points in this essay is to prove to the contrary; that is to answer in the affirmative as to the author's success and as this will, in considering „Venetia“ in detail be brought prominently forward, a few words will for the present suffice upon this subject. So much has been written by men of letters such as Hunt, who in his unfavourable narrations has shown his ingratitude to his former protector and helper; Moore who has placed the matter in as favourable a light as possible; and Medwin who has chiefly followed the instructions of Byron himself; besides many more of greater or lesser note; respecting the character of that remarkable man whom Macaulay designates „the spoiled child of fame“, and of whom it is remarked that like Rousseau, his literary works, and name as poet are inseparably connected with his character and life; that there is no lack of material to enable us to judge how far the author has attained his object of showing this forth in a work of fiction.

In the first place it must be affirmed that many of the incidents and sayings introduced and interwoven into the narrative, are taken, either word for word, or with trivial alterations from the actual occurrences and utterances of Byron which form so great a matter of interest in his life, and are universally acknowledged to exemplify his character. These are often filled up by circumstances, so as to fit them for the story, other characters are ably brought upon the scene, and a connection given to the whole. For instance the assertion of Byron which Medwin has given in his „Journal of Conversations of Lord Byron“ (page 41) „I have a prejudice about women: I do not like to see them eat“ is made use of in the dinner-party given by Lady Monteagle where Mr. Pole points out Lord Cedurcis to a lady, excited by the general devotion to this distinguished person, and proposes the possibility that she might

be so honoured as to sit by him at dinner. He warns her however that his Lordship does not like women who eat, and she declares that she will eat nothing. This and other accounts in the condemned second volume, as well as many other relations throughout the whole are not only true to the model; but the personages connected with the strange event here described are well introduced, their dispositions and characters aptly portrayed and sustained, and the account thus rendered full of interest. These facts cannot here be treated of in detail, it may however be maintained that the author of „Venetia“ has, without descending too much into trivialities well shown forth the character of the brilliant poet; while his youthful pride of station and pedigree, which was not excessive or overbearing, he has kept in the back ground; and only incidentally mentioned. His early attachment to his teachers & those who led him by kindness and interest in the Bible and religion and his geniality to the old servants of the family is incidentally brought forward. Then his love of solitude is commented upon, and his satisfaction in after life on account of the fame he had acquired, his courting and gaining the applause of all around him, his sceptical views, which like his political and religious principles in general seemed not to be very fixed, and as Sir Walter Scott observes, chiefly to consist in availing himself of good opportunities of writing satires upon other people. For on account of the talent of the man, his speech in the House of Lords produced some favour, while he himself treated it as a joke. Then his fitfulness, occasional sullenness, and the hilarity of his nature, with his special prejudices, and peculiarities, which produce the conviction in the mind of Lady Annabel that he was wrapped up in himself and could never make a good husband; but that with all his declarations of Love, a separation would inevitably ensue before many mouths of married life were over. However his desire for the welfare of mankind and happiness for all around him, his friendly and generous disposition are but slightly brought out. In fact he has pictured Lord Cadurcis what Lord Byron really was; a man of friendly temperament and liberal mould of character, full of passing sentiment, but allowing himself to be led away from the path of rectitude, a man whose amiable side makes us bitterly regret his want of ballast, and that which would have gained respect as well as fame.

II. It will only be necessary to consider a few of the somewhat inconsistent remarks upon the execution of the work. In comparing this novel with others I fail to see the great pretensions of which it is accused; as not only in the opening chapters but

in many other places, with the „talent, liveliness, and eloquence“ which the reviewers freely admit, there is so remarkable a simplicity in the style that a child might read the greater part of these volumes with pleasure. The words which follow respecting the „crudity in the conception and haste in the execution“ may be partly true of a few portions, but are in the main unfounded. The reviewers remind us of a gardener, who will not only weed out the wild plants, but every flower which is not of the choicest and so leave a bareness in his garden: or of those who criticise in the spirit expressed by Juvenal in his racy Satire

„Stulta est Clementia, cum tot ubique

Vatibus (here scriptoribus) occurras periturae parcere chartae.“

Even such men as Sir Walter Scott, Sir William Hamilton & c were not spared. The only one of the „overwrought incidents“ is the dwelling rather long upon the meeting again of the father. His rejoining the daughter at such a time cannot be classed among the everyday incidents of life, but we must remember that the course of some is more eventful than that of others, and many things as strange have happened to those whose career is not to be classed among the strange or unusual.

There are a few grammatical errors; and a few expressions, but very few, which seem scarcely dignified enough to be inserted in a book. We find on page 59 „They had not know each other — — — — like us“ sometimes „an union“ (which is incorrect), at other times „a union“; — „If all that we have gained — — — — — was erased“ (Tauch. Ed. Vol. II page 210); — (He said to himself) „years must elapse before he was (would be) his own master“; — „ — — — could not have rode home“ (page 75); sometimes „lit“ for lighted and the conversation of the lady's-maid is more unpolished than is necessary. However these drawbacks would not justify the terms applied to the two works „Henrietta Temple“ and „Venetia“ — „many redundancies, extravagancies, and even vulgarities.“ The reviewers should rather have given the unapproving words as a caution to the author, showing him that which impoverishes an otherwise good production. They have however written upon his works as a comparative failure with a few redeeming spurts of eloquence and display of talent. There is a conventional standard which some place before them, strongly reminding us of the mathematician who said, speaking of Milton's „Paradise Lost;“ „Yes, I grant that it is a good sort of poem; but what does it prove? Although there are still some who incline to the views expressed in the article before us, the works of Disraeli have been perused by so many of the more intelligent classes in England, and men

of letters, who bear testimony to the many excellencies they exhibit; that since these words of criticism appeared, they have justly obtained a place among the standard literature of the nineteenth century. In many people looking at the same object, there are peculiarities which strike each, according as he is predisposed. We remember that Jeffrey the editor of this very Edinburgh Review incurred the displeasure of Sir Walter Scott by condemning „Marmion“ on account of political prejudices and thus inducing him to favour the advances of John Murray and become a contributor to „the Quarterly Review“. Among other complaints is one that the characters introduced are few. The best answer which can be given to this is to enumerate them; namely eight principal characters; Lady Annabel, Marmion Herbert, Venetia, Dr. Masham, Lady Monteagle, all varying very much, and in the novel well sustained, besides Pouncefort, the gipsy-man, Justice, Mr. Pole and others who play a more or less important part at various phases of the story.

The reviewers add „We will not deny that some of his situations are powerfully painted, and that he is occasionally dramatic and forcible in the language of feeling“. This is a great admission after so much censure, and in all we may concur except in the expression „dramatic“; which quality is as a rule no ornament to a novel, and as inappropriate as a bouquet of wax-flowers in a glass case, in the middle of a garden flower-bed. For the language and whole dressing up of a drama is so different from that of a work of fiction, that while most people can read the latter and give delight to a whole party of people old and young; respecting the former, we feel from the heart with Cicero (*De Oratore* I. V) „in qua quum omnes in oris et vocis et motus moderatione elaborent, quis ignorant quam pauci sint fuerintque, quos animo aequo spectare possimus“? Many of the statements either in praise or blame seem so emphatic and to treat of the whole work, that they certainly border on contradictions: for in the paragraph commencing „the best part of ‚Venetia‘ is undoubtedly the first volume“, there is so much said in praise, that it cannot coincide with the wholesale deterioration of the novel in the opening remarks. Perhaps the second volume is as a whole not equal to the first but there are many portions of it not inferior, and many of great interest, and displaying equal talent.

In some instances there is copying, and sometimes even the very words of other writers, with a word or two altered, which alteration is generally an improvement. This fact and the many acknowledged, even by the Edinburgh Reviewers, touching and

estimable passages show the author to be in no way dependent on the works of others.

III. As to the choice of subject, which is so much objected to by the reviewers. The remark „We do not think it would have been possible, by any talent to have reconciled us to the subject“, is not strictly philosophical; for genius must be acknowledged to be genius, and must be considered in itself apart from our opinion of the motives of its author.

Probably most of the survivors of Lord Byron would object to his life and others connected with him being made the subject of a novel; but poets and literary men like kings and emperors, occupying an important place in public thought are exposed to having their character and actions made the property of all book-makers. Some go even so far as to maintain that all works of fiction are rather to be regretted as not productive of good whether they, like Democritus laugh at, or like Heraclitus mourn over the follies and errors of mankind.

Certainly it was the opinion of the unhappy Byron that an account of his follies might be a warning to young men, which opinion he expressed to Medwin of the 24 Light Dragoons, when he handed him his notes, which he said might be published without alteration. As however the relations of Byron do not probably coincide in the feelings of their departed friend, it might have been wiser and kinder to have avoided this subject. Even if this be granted, the expressions used by the reviewers are too strong. However this question is here only slightly touched upon, forming part of the review, but need no further comment not belonging to the real criticism of the work. Its moral tendency, which in such novels is often the chief object is undoubtedly good.

The works of our author have been casually mentioned by other writers. In „An Autobiography“ Anthony Trollope has still more unequivocally condemned them in such language, that I will pass over his opinion as utterly valueless.

The fact is, it cannot be maintained that our author is perfect; nor has popularity ever ascribed to him a fame among those who stand at the very first of the list of novelists; but there is a large number of very intelligent readers in England who can appreciate his works and admire the good even if they do not entirely pass over the faults which they contain.

This novel does not deal with any adventures of pirates, or marvellous escapes but with the simple affairs of everyday life.

There is not to be found in it the lengthy description of scenery or the exalted tone of Sir Walter Scott, for the subject

is a more homely one; but the characters, as in a well written drama are well sustained, and the household incidents are therein more in the colloquial but animated style of Dickens portrayed. Like the latter writer, the author, who at one time swayed rule over the political arena of England, descends to the description of the trivial events of life, and presents them in such a form as to produce a beneficial moral influence upon society, and to some extent relieves his story with similar pleasantries; and if these jeux d'esprit are not so continued and so pointed, it can truly be affirmed, that the impression of exaggeration in his representations is not so much to be feared. He never overburdens the reader with long descriptions, or a perpetual recurrence of pleasantries produced with effort; but there is a quick and natural succession of scenes.

In reading this romance we are somewhat reminded of Souvestre's „La Maison Rouge“ but cannot but compare it favourably with the last mentioned work, which with all its vivid representations, its well developed plot, and sustained interest, leaves the impression to the reader of want of any definite object but to amuse.

It is also satisfactory to find that right through the narrative the supernatural, which is not only introduced into Hauff's tales, but even in such works as „A Strange Story“ by Bulwer „the Monastery“ by Sir Walter Scott is in „Venetia“ entirely excluded.

It has often been asserted that truth is stranger than fiction. Whether this be the case or not, in reading interesting and even exciting accounts, there is to the lover of truth a peculiar pleasure in feeling that if they are not taken from actual fact, they are at least within the range of possibility; while there is with all the enjoyment experienced in the perusal of good works of fiction, a conviction of something unsatisfactory in finding a ghostly apparition or spiritual agency incompatible with the rest of the story. (Of course such tales as „Christmas Carol“ where the introduction of spirits has a very special object, are not included in this remark.) In „Venetia“, while there is throughout everything to excite curiosity and delight; while the whole tale is full of that which is curious and eventful; not only is it entirely in accordance with the coincidents of human life; but the subjects are drawn from real personages, and in the opening chapters by far the most important descriptions are derived from the history of the celebrated Lord Byron; and in the further study of the novel, if we regard it as divisible into two histories, that of Venetia, and that of Lord Cadurcis, it is evident that the bulk of what is related of the latter was suggested by the perusal of his life. For in analysing the description of

this character we find that the habits of Byron, almost in their détail, his temperament and general disposition, and personal qualifications and predilections, as well as many of the circumstances of his remarkable life are too forcibly depicted for this not to be the case: although, as the author did not profess to write a true history much is differently presented and appropriately omitted. For even the peculiar events connected with so remarkable a personage as Lord Byron would scarcely be sufficient in themselves, or connected enough in their occurrence to form what is demanded by the British public, in a romance, or tale of fiction, without the filling up, and imaginative genius of one capable of arranging and writing such works. There is certainly very much due to the talent and skill of the author. The conversation introduced and the main drift of the story are entirely his own; although even some of the modes of address between mother and son are suggested by the letters and accounts, which the friends of the late Lord Byron have handed down to us. Thomas Moore has, in giving an account of Byron's life sought to cover his faults; and, to use the language of Macaulay; (to vindicate) „as far as truth will permit, the memory of a celebrated man who can no longer vindicate himself“, showing forth his courage, and other generous phases of his character. Disraeli has in his „Venetia“, not like Hunt, too sadly exhibited the shady side, but while showing the remarkable scenes of the sad life of the poet; his gloomy moods, and irritability, he brings out his friendly and humorous gaiety, of which Sir Walter Scott wrote „Report had prepared me to meet a man of peculiar habits and a quick temper, — — — — I was most agreeably disappointed in this respect“.*)

And surely it cannot be affirmed that he has chosen an inappropriate subject as basis for his work: for there is perhaps scarcely another man whose writings seem so inseparably connected with his life and character, that when we hear of Don Juan or Childe Harold, the author of these poems, the incidents of his life and especially his disposition and actions pass in an instant through our mind. The pen of some of the best writers of the English language and of many authors of celebrity, has been employed upon this theme. For we may mention in the list Macaulay, Thomas Moore, Lady Blessington, Sir Egerton Brydges, Bart, an elegant writer who seeks somewhat to screen the poet and make some allowance for the unfortunate circumstances in which he was placed; Dallas,

*) Moore's Life of Byron, Complete Edition: Murray, 1860 P. 280.

Galt, Medwin, Sir Walter Scott, in a letter to Moore which he begins by a description of Byron's character and manners; besides many writers such as Lake, Elze, Ebert, Böttger, who did not know Byron personally. Even so late as 1878 the Revd. Francis Hodgson published some letters and communications which he possessed, having been a personal friend of his Lordship. Hunt, who had been helped and befriended by Byron, as he in no way merited has written in an unfavourable manner, of which the Quarterly Review justly remarks „This is the miserable book of a miserable man.“

Referring to the mother of Lord Cadurcis we may ask, if even the mind of the author, with all its fertility of invention, and readiness of expression, could have conceived such a remarkable individual as Mrs. Cadurcis, if he had not borne in mind the mother of Lord Byron. Her very strange habit of throwing anything which was at hand at her son, is seldom found even among the lower classes of society, and this is not as in some of Dickens' productions overdrawn.

I propose to examine and comment upon the salient points in the narrative of „Venetia“ dividing my observations into paragraphs referring to particular chapters of the novel, and having special reference to the similarity therein to the histories which we possess of Byron.

§ I.

Disraeli has in the first place adroitly veiled the true source from which he gained his materials for laying the plan of his work, by choosing „Venetia“ as a title, and bringing the heroine very prominently forward, while really the most interesting and striking points in the first part of the story are concentrated in the young Lord who is scarcely mentioned till the sixth chapter, introducing the reader not only to Venetia and Lady Annabel but to Dr. Masham who plays an important part to the end.

§ II.

In Chapters II, III, IV, the circumstances of the birth and early life of Byron are gradually introduced into the story. The abbey „having served for nearly two centuries and a half as the principal dwelling of an old baronial family“ is literally true of Newstead Abbey; for in the reign of Henry VIII, the possessions of the Byron family became enlarged by the gift of the church

and priory in consequence of the dissolution of the monasteries. The description of the old abbey is also taken from Newstead. Entering the large court the curious fountain is brought before our notice, the desolation all around. The title of Lord had first been granted to the family in the year 1643 in the person of Sir John Byron. And the fifth Lord Byron had in the manner described in our narrative suffered his property to fall into decay, being a very peculiar man, and taking little interest in his relations.*) The melancholy aspect of Newstead is therefore vividly delineated, and the appearance as of a haunted dwelling. That in the narrative the former owner did not live in the residence of his ancestors is a departure from the original, which adds an effect to the tale and avoids the introduction of too many unimportant personages.

§ III.

We next consider the entrance of Mrs. Cadurcis and her son into the estate, and the character of this lady, as set forth in the V and VI Chapters. Here there is a remarkable correspondence between the position of Mrs. Cadurcis and the mother of Byron brought out in the conversation of the nurse with Lady Annabel, the latter replying „Mrs. Cadurcis is a widow; with a very slender fortune. Her son will not enjoy his estate until he is of age, and its rental is small“. Fortunately Mrs. Byron was a widow at the time of the death of the great uncle of her son. Her husband appears to have married her, only to pay off with her large fortune his many debts; which fortune he so reduced, that she was obliged to content herself with the annual income of l. 150, and even this amount on his visit to her from France was still further reduced. Mrs. Byron did not as the subjects of our novel, inhabit the abbey till some time after; it being let to Lord Grey.

§ IV.

In the sixth chapter we have brought before us a description of the personal appearance and peculiar character of Mrs. Byron under the name of Mrs. Cadurcis; the incidents of her visit to Lady Annabel and the remarkable conversation of the mother; with the peculiar conduct of the son supplied and dressed up, by

*) Moore L. of B. (complete Edition: Murray 1860) P. 82.

the ready inventive faculty of the author; all exactly portraying Mrs. Byron and her son. Compare the words of Moore, — — — Mrs. Byron who was a short and corpulent person, and rolled considerably in her gait, would in a rage endeavour to catch him“;*) and „— — — a post-chaise drove up to the hall, whence issued a short and very stout woman with a rubicund countenance.“**) The mediocrity of Mrs. Cadurcis, which is faithful to the original thrown into the narrative gives variation and elasticity to it, as in the tales of Charles Dickens the introduction of such personages, which is very frequent, produces a very appropriate play to the whole, and relieves it as a hamlet or a woodman in a landscape, or a hulk upon the strand. Besides, the author no doubt considered it a very natural thing that the mother of one, suddenly coming into the possession of the estates and title of his ancestors should very much resemble Mrs. Cadurcis as he has presented her. The language is sufficiently dignified for a book, and not too true to nature, as is the case in the account of the contention of the gladiators in the tavern in „the Last Days of Pompeii“, which otherwise is certainly the best or one of the best of Bulwer Lytton's works.

We have here admirably blended as in a picture the light and shade: exuberance of affection, combined with ungovernable temper where the strange qualities possessed by the mother of Byron. Most of the English novels have either for good or for evil some moral or religious tendency, and just as Dickens in his „Hard Times“ has exhibited a kind but somewhat misguided father so Disraeli has selected this remarkable woman as model, and he has not failed in tracing the results of her education upon her son. Very few mothers act precisely in the way in which Mrs. Cadurcis is represented as doing, especially in that station in life; but many are provoked to paroxysms of rage and affection; so that the whole proceeding is appropriately described; besides being similar to the course which Mrs. Byron pursued in training her son. Venetia's „Seven Champions“ took the place, in the narrative of the poker, tongs, and other articles which in Byron's education***) were used as weapons for correction. Even before strangers there was the same curious behaviour, which we have portrayed by the pen of our novel-writer; for we read in Moore's account that, „Mrs. Byron whose paroxysms of passion were not like those of

*) Moore's Life of B. Murray; 1860 P. 13.

**) Book I Ch. VI.

***) Moore's Life of B. Murray 1860 P. 34.

her son silent rages' would on all these occasions, break out into such audible fits of temper as it was impossible to keep from reaching the ears of the scholars and the servants;**) The occasions referred to are when Dr. Glennie strove to prevent the repeated interruptions to the studies of the young nobleman (occasioned by Mrs. Byron taking him home for a few day,) by invoking the interposition of his guardian, Lord Carlisle. Dr. Glennie describes Mrs. Byron as a woman without anything prepossessing in her personal appearance, a total stranger to English manners, with an uncultivated mind, and not having the understanding and sagacity to learn from those around her, or in any way to compensate for this defect, being very ill-adapted to form the character and manners of a young nobleman. The words — „you know you do it to provoke me, you little brat“; put into the mouth of Mrs. Cadurcis, are gathered from actual occurrence;**) for in the memoir of Byron we find him expressing his feelings when his mother in one of her violent outbursts of temper, called him „a lame brat“. Disraeli has wisely excluded the lameness, which interests the reader of the life of the illustrious Byron, as an actual fact and would be applicable to the description of a beggar or old soldier; but not suitable to the present story. Besides, this would have been too evident a copy and indeed a slavish imitation, from an author who possesses ample material as well as skill in treating his subject.

§ V.

We have also in the sixth chapter some insight into the principal traits in the character of Byron, viewed in the person of the young Lord Cadurcis. Byron says of himself „I differed not at all from other children, being neither tall nor short, dull nor witty of my age, but rather lively — except in my sullen moods, and then I was always a Devil“.***) In one of these sullen moods the young Cadurcis is graphically described entering the room of Lady Annabel with a sulky nod, contradicting and opposing everything which his mother said and refusing to do anything which she desired. The repartee of the boy and the mode in which he receives the reproaches of his mother portrayed in this and especially in the ninth chapter are very entertaining to the

*) Moore Life of B. (1860) P. 16.

**) Medwin Jour. of the Conv. of L. B. P. 54.

***) Moore's Life of B. (1860) P. 34.

reader. Byron, at a very early age showed this sullen temperament and on one occasion when very young being reprimanded by his nurse, who usually had more command over him than his mother, he tore a new frock in which he had been dressed and stood silently defying the anger and annoyance which such an act naturally occasioned. That nothing, even the cakes and Mountain could tempt her son to alter his conduct, but more forcibly brings out the way in which the youthful days of Byron were spent with his mother. We are reminded of the party of young friends when he refused to come down and play with the children, and also of his strange reticence when Mrs. Byron called on a friend the next morning with her son. And the change which came over Cadurcis in the story, well exhibits the way Lord Byron acted, when his mother getting up to go, one of the company alluding to the play which they had lately seen performed said „Good by, Gaby. Then Byron turned, his countenance lighted up, he refused to go and talked without reserve“.*) The mode in which the young lord received the reproaches of his mother is strikingly exemplified; the silence of the boy provoking Mrs. Cadurcis more and more, and when she at last cried out „Plantagenet, do you hear me?“ his answering „Yes, everybody hears you, Mrs. Cadurcis“, though not quite so bitterly scornful is suggested by the passive share which Lord Byron took in these unfortunate scenes of his childhood annoying by refraining from uttering a word, being perfectly persuaded that anything which he might say would be quite ineffectual in allaying the storm, and feeling that his only course was to avoid all words. At the same time he used to bow to her, whenever she thus acted and the more profoundly whenever in her ungovernable rage her voice sounded louder and louder.***) Our author has avoided such a revolting display of insult and contempt, and very properly brought forth in an entertaining manner, with an almost amusing adjunct of repartee on the part of the son the general traits in the characters of both.

The boy experienced in such furies of his mother escaping in time to avoid being struck by the volume hurled at him, „and pushing his chair before his infuriated mother“; being then chased round the room; his „suddenly seizing Lady Annabel's worktable, and whirling it before her“, are all scenes vividly painted from colours derived from the history of the illustrious poet, enlivened

*) Moore Life of B. (1860) P. 33.

**) Moore's Life of B. (1860) P. 34.

by the genius of the author in transferring them; with the introduction to the animated group, of the startled and excited bloodhound.

The generous side of the young lord's character is brought into play, by the good influences of Lady Annabel. From the accounts which Dr. Glennie gives of his pupil we see how easily he was governed and influenced, when placed under the care of judicious and suitable instructors. This all formed suggestions for the author to work out, which he has admirably succeeded in doing. Dr. Glennie had a bed put for him in his own study and found him always tractable and quiet enough with him, although he showed the same desire „to excel in all exercises as the most robust youth of the school.“ The words of Dr. Busy, a man, so eminently connected with the names of Dryden and many famous men corroborate the statements of Dr. Glennie, for although he said,“(*) I soon found that a wild mounttain colt had been committed to my management“ he added, „His manner and temper soon convinced me, that he might be led by a silken string to a point, rather than by a cable“. All this is brought out by the entrance of Venetia so beautifully described in the words, „she really looked like an angel of peace sent from haven on a mission of concord“ and the wise mediation of Lady Annabel, who brought before him the respect due to his mother, because she bore this relationship, notwithstanding all her faults. It is remarkable in the letters of Byron that notwithstanding the curious productions which he addressed to his maternal relative, totally incompatible with the duties of a son towards his mother, there is a frequent recurrence not only to a style of respect but even of affection. There is a great difference between his letter to Mrs. Byron from Newstead Abby of the 7th Oct. 1808 and that of Nov. 2 of the same year, or what he wrote to his mother from Smyrna on the 19th of March 1810. We may be sure that there was no small amount of natural generosity and relenting in his composition or it would scarcely have been possible for a reconciliation to take place after the quarrel of the 9th August 1806, when he wrote to his friends informing them of his shifting places of abode, and requesting them to conceal them from his mother.

The very excusable pride which the poet manifested, on being elevated to the distinguished position of peer of the realm, shown among other things in his asking his mother if she discerned any

(*) Moore L. of B. (1860) P. 19.

difference in his external appearance, is very feebly brought out at this part of the story. The great poet himself was not noted for any excessive haughtiness, or undue imperiousness of character. He was supposed by his mother and others to resemble Rousseau*), and what this French writer says may fairly be applied to Byron „S'il est un orgueil pardonable après celui qui ce tire du mérite personnel, c'est celui qui ce tire de la naissance.“

§ VI.

(Having special reference to Chapters VIII, X, XI, XII.) It would be affirming too much to maintain that the companionship of Venetia and the young Cadurcis, their affection and youthful pastimes were entirely derived from the history of Mary Duff or Miss Chaworth, which latter is in some respects more appropriate, but no doubt much is suggested from Byron's accounts of such early attachments. He wrote in his journal. „How very odd that I should have been so utterly devotedly fond of that girl at an age when I could neither feel passion, nor know the meaning of the word**).“

For though the earlier chapters derive their chief interest from the young lord, the further development of the tale justifies the choice of its title. The character of Venetia, the secret chamber, the passionate refusal to marry any but a poet and man of renown, and the meeting of the father, afterwards form the most important side to the story. Yet there is much in the seventh and eighth chapters descriptive of Byron, and throughout the history of the poet is continued. His education having been neglected; the little grammar school at Morpeth where he had obtained some imperfect knowledge of Latin; yet being fond of reading had picked up, in an odd way, more knowledge than might have been supposed. His guardian he had never seen; agreeing with the connection which existed between Lord Carlisle and Byron. It was noticed by the companions of Byron at Harrow that he was possessed of a great deal of general information, and it was for some time a problem whence all this was derived; till one day, one of the scholars of the school suggested that he gathered all this knowledge from the Reviews. The good Dr. Masham coming over once a week introduces an individual who is almost inseparable with the story and distinct from all the rest, who

*) Moore's L. of B. (1860) P. 60.

**) Moore L. of B. (1860) P. 9.

on various occasions makes his appearance as the confidant of Lady Annabel, the adviser of the young, and a general favourite in the society in which he moves. In reading the story for the first time we wonder if he is possibly the real father of Venetia, but separated from Lady Annabel, coming over only occasionally to see her. The author has the great art of making his romance interesting and exciting to read, without filling it with improbable adventures; and bringing curious and extraordinary scenes of life before us, but in such a way that they are in the highest degree natural and reasonable, so that we are not able to guess what is to be the issue of the plot. In Dr. Masham we are reminded of the many youthful studies of Byron, and the masters to whose care he was committed. To them he always behaved respectfully with two exceptions, the one being a young master named Huntley; and the other Dr. Butler, whose election to the school of Harrow he had violently opposed. On being invited by the latter with some of his companions to dine with him, he was the only one to refuse the invitation; and being asked his reason for so doing, replied „If you should happen to come into my neighbourhood when I was staying at Newstead, I certainly should not ask you to dine with me, and therefore feel that I ought not to dine with you“.

The solitary walks and musings of the poet as a youth are interwoven into the thread of the story in these early chapters, sometimes being copied from the life, and almost the very words derived from the source from which, one side of the story is planned. We may justly compare the words in „Venetia“ „He would lie awake for hours, indulging in sweet and unconscious reveries, and brooding over the future morn, that always brought happiness:“(*) and those in the „Life of Byron“. „My passion had its usual effects upon me — I could not sleep — I could not eat — I could not rest: and although I had reason to know that she loved me, it was the texture of my life to think of the time which must elapse before we could meet again, being usually about twelve hours of separation!“(**) And when Cadurcis tells Venetia of his secretly going out of his room and prowling about the landing we find the frame of mind of the poet displayed in the words(***) „I often do so at the abbey. I like to walk up and down an old gallery alone at night. I do not know why; but I like

*) Vol. I Chap VIII p. 52 Jauchniss Edition.

**) Moore's L. of B. (1860) P. 18.

***) Moore L. of B. P. 18.

it very much." Byron even at Harrow used sometimes to separate himself from his school-fellows and muse to himself. Before he lived at the abbey, when it was let to Lord Grey, he often went up to it and entered the grounds. The abbey as well as the scenes of his earlier life in Scotland were likely to develop his imagination, and kindle his poetic fire. „His love of solitary rambles, and his taste for exploring in all directions led him not unfrequently so far, as to excite serious apprehensions for his safety.“*) With all Byron's gaiety and readiness to mix in the sports of his playmates; unlike the latter, he would sometimes retire and thoughtfully consider a tomb in the neighbourhood of Windsor, which in consequence received the name of „Byron's tomb.“**) For hours he would recline upon the ground in this spot, no doubt having some undeveloped thoughts of the poetical effusions which should immortalise his name.

This of course is worthy of notice in the life of the poet. However his biographers seem to have regarded it as an inseparable phase in his poetical career, and their remarks remind us of the words so often reiterated respecting an ancient philosopher ἥσκει δέ, φησὶν δ' Ἀντισθένης, καὶ ποικίλως δοκιμάζειν τὰς φαντασίας, ἐξημάζων ἐνίοτε καὶ τοῖς τάφοις ἐνδιατριβῶν (Antisth. ap. Diog. lib. IX, 38). It is however probably true as Moore suggests that this circumstance called forth from him at the age of fifteen the lines.

„My epitaph shall be my name alone
If this with honour fail to crown my clay
Oh may no other fame my deeds repay!
That only that, shall single out the spot
By that remembered or with that forgot.

In' one paragraph the feelings of Byron respecting his position as English nobleman, and member of the House of Lords, in which he hoped one day with dignity and pride to take his seat, are set forth. The young lord in the narrative is represented as having a full appreciation of his future position; as looking back upon the history of his ancestors with every emotion of satisfaction and pleasure. He was well acquainted with, and often reflected upon the deeds recorded of the valiant men who had preceeded him: and although at present a mere child sharing his pastimes, and studies with his fair and loved companion his thoughts in his

*) Moore L. of B. P. 8.

**) Moore L. of B. P. 26.

moments of solitude were diverted to the history of his ancient and glorious line. And to this is added, what gives effect to the whole, the way in which he received the remarks of others upon the subject. When what he considered his inferior companions at Morpeth perpetually reminded him, „with chuckling self-complacency, of his future greatness“; his answer was disdainful and he affected the most haughty indifference about it, although in secret he „ever brooded over his destiny as his only consolation“.*) This brings to our recollection many passages in the life of Byron. In the year 1797, shortly before his succeeding to the title of his Uncle, Mrs. Byron read to him a speech delivered in the House of Commons. A friend remarked, „We shall have the pleasure some time or other, of reading your speeches in the House of Commons“. The youthful aspirant replied with almost prophetic appropriateness; „I hope not: if you read any speeches of mine, it will be in the House of Lords.“***) We are reminded also of his pain and sorrow on hearing that one of the monitors at Harrow was about to mention the name of a nobleman, as a subject for punishment; and the many little incidents, which are not unusual accompaniments of boys of rank.

The Byron family was both ancient and distinguished. It was so ancient that the first lord came over with William the conqueror into England. Shortly afterwards the name of Ralph de Burun, a knight living in one of the castles in Nottinghamshire found a place in the Domesday Book. Under the reign of Edward I. the Byrons were also an influential family, possessing large extent of lands. To these the lucrative Rochdale estate in Lancashire was annexed and from the division of the wealth thus augmented many of the first families in the county of Nottinghamshire arose. So that for a long time the ancient line was marked by the possession of riches and influence although at the time of the accession of the young Byron, this wealth was much reduced. The name of Byron was also connected with deeds of valour. For among the perpetual wars which so harassed France under Edward III., whose son Edward, the Black Prince, in that land acquired such fame, and carried his arms with such success, we find that the Byrons won for themselves honours for their achievements at Cressy, Bosworth, and Marston Moor. Many of this celebrated race were the favourites of the kings of England, and were honoured

*) Vol. I p. 53 Tauchniss Ed.

**) Moore L. of B. (Murray 1860) P. 10.

by them with titles and wealth, although as it often happens in the homes of the aristocracy, bad management and extravagance had embarrassed their families and begun to reduce their wealth, soon after the favours had been bestowed upon them by James I. They also remained loyal to their cause and continued to receive the acknowledgments of their services from their sovereigns. Connected with the history of Colonel Hutchinson, the name of Sir John Byron comes prominently forward as faithful through all fortunes to his monarch. The poet would extend their exploits to the Holy Land, and was evidently of opinion that they had taken part in the Holy Wars. He seems to have conjectured this from certain carvings in the abbey which bore memorials of his ancestors, representing the heads of Saracens.

The author then shows more plainly that he has borrowed from the above mentioned history by proceeding to the consideration of the late Lord. He had previously mentioned that this Lord was a most remarkable man, which is strikingly true of the uncle of Byron; who differed in this respect from the former occupier mentioned in the novel, that he lived at the abbey, and of whom the most extraordinary tales were current in the neighbourhood. It is also true that he had forfeited all claims to gratitude on the part of his nephew, having neglected and even „robbed the inheritance to the utmost of his power“ selling contrary to law, Rochdale, one of its richest dependencies, with its coal mines; which was at great legal expense recovered, after the succession of the young Lord.*)

The curious disposition of Byron to covet not only the possessions but the peculiarities of his notorious relation, and not only to succeed to his title but also to his eccentricities is in our story attributed to the hero of the tale, although the way in which this was manifested is not really brought out till further on in the work. In fact this is scarcely compatible with that stage of the account, and somewhat too vividly betrays the field from which the author gleaned. This is aptly set off with Mrs. Cadurcis, in vain pouring „forth upon this, the favourite theme for her wrath and lamentations, all the bitter expressions of her rage and woe“ **)

The natural disposition of the two children and the effect favourable and otherwise of the different educations, form the pith

*) Moore L. of B. (Murray 1860) P. 10.

**) Page 53 Jauch. Ed.

of the story, and the eighth chapter winds up with a contrast of the two homes. Venetia turning „to a happy home, welcomed by the smile of a soft and beautiful parent, and with words of affection sweeter than music“. „Plantagenet so differently situated, with no one to sympathise with his thoughts, and perhaps at the very moment, goaded into some unhappy quarrel with his mother“.

§ VII.

In the tenth chapter there is a conversation between the two children about their fathers, in which the quarrels of Mrs. Cadurcis and her husband are mentioned. As Byron's father married only for the sake of the wealth he thereby obtained, his quarrelling with his wife would not have been a matter of surprise, even if she had possessed a more amiable disposition. True to her extremes of passionate feeling even when he was absent in France she always seemed to regard him with some affection; she used to ask the nurse who had occasion to meet him (though she would not see him herself) with all the evidences of tenderest anxiety, as to the health and appearance of her husband.*) It is to be wondered at that she should express any sorrow at the loss of such a man, who openly confessed that he married her for her money's sake, and constantly deplored the straightened circumstances to which they were reduced, murmuring to her at the penury, which his own folly had occasioned. She however not only mourned his loss, but on being informed of his death broke forth into shrieks of grief, and aroused the neighbourhood by her cries of distraction. Although this as well as many other details are passed over in the narrative; the two extremes in the character of this remarkable woman are well reproduced by the pen of our author.

Cadurcis rambles at night, and when staying at Cherbury has fears, as he stands against the wall, in the shade; but determines whatever happens not to cry out. He saw a tall white figure with a light, which he found was Lady Annabel walking along the gallery, and entering at the door, leading to the mysterious apartments, which had so often excited the curiosity of the youth, as they excite the curiosity of the reader, and add a charm and interest to the tale. However the production of the author in its application and adaptation, is suggested by a circumstance in the

*) Moore L. of B. (1860) P. 6.

life of Byron. In so bold a boy as was the illustrious poet, it would scarcely be expected that, even in his earlier years, signs of fear of the dark, or giving way to superstitious frailties would be manifested. However in his constant, that is daily visits to the Chaworth family at Annesley, from whence he used to return at night to Newstead, which coincides with the daily visits of Cadurcis to Cherbury and his return in the evening to the abbey, we find that this was not the case; for he gravely said to Miss Chaworth and her cousin, with evident signes of sincerity „In going home last night I saw a bogle“.*) And what is most remarkable such an effect this sight had on his mind, that he expressed his unwillingness to return home that evening, and showed how fully convinced he was that he might be again terrified by the sight of a visitant from the land of spirits, by sleeping at Annesley during the rest of the time that he continued to visit the family.

The author in the eleventh chapter introduces the visit to the rectory of Marringhurst, the pleasant abode of Dr. Masham, a most loyal adherent to his cause, and playfully eypresses his adherence to the union of Church and State, simply from the old force of habit, at a time when such a union was not, as at present threatened soon to be a thing of the past.

The ghost story of Mrs. Cadurcis which she affirmed to be true, and an actual occurrence in her family, the recital of which so affected Venetia, being at the same time displeasing to Lady Annabel, is quite in accordance with the marvellous superstition of Mrs. Byron, and the still stranger credulity of her son.**) The sober friends of this lady more resembling Lady Annabel were often astonished by her rambling tales, portraying the mysterious wonders produced by the faculty of second sight; and notwithstanding the natural tendency to superstition which the imagination of a poet tends to foster; we cannot but be surprised at Byron's theft of the charmed agate bead, of which the owner had told him that as long as she kept it in her possession she should never be in love; and at his refusing to return the coveted amulet, telling her that she should never see it again.

§ VIII.

Referring to Chapters XII XIX XX. In the twelfth chapter the author continues the account of the youthful companions and

*) Moore L. of B. P. 27.

**) Moore L. of B. (Complete Ed. Murray 1860) P. 45. Medwin. Jour. of Con. of L. B. P. 100.

their homes. He dwells long, but not too long, upon these happy scenes, and the restraint which the young lord exercised over himself, under the advice and wise influence of Lady Annabel and the affectionate sympathy of Venetia. He continues to bring out the contrast in the two homes, and the sullen temper of the boy combined with his more generous and tractable spirit, and in order to contrast his early conduct with the unrestrained licence of the after-period of his life, he draws a beautiful picture of filial and dutiful affection towards Lady Annabel, who, especially after the death of his mother, received him to her own home, and treated him as a son; and of love to Venetia, whom he regarded as a sister, and made the confidante of all his sorrows and joys. This scene closes with the pious and loving words of Lady Annabel, her gentle counsels inculcating love & obedience to his guardian, her promise to befriend him, and telling him that he is not to forget that Cherbury is also his home; beautifully describing it as „the home of your heart, if not of the law“, warning him of what he had to expect at Eton.*) With her blessing and her prayers embracing him she bade him fare well. We read of Plantagenet's emotions on leaving Cherbury and hoping to make it his home during the Vacations, wishing that Eton were near Cherbury, and his promising to remain attached to Venetia and all his old associations. The allusion to the closed rooms of which Venetia might find out before his return what was shut up in them is a happy reference, carrying the reader onward to the time when she actually stole into those secret chambers.

In a criticism upon this work, the fact should not be passed over that it is of a far more elevated style than many works of fiction. There is none of the acquired diction which is to be found, even in some novels of unquestionable beauty and merit, as „The Last of the Barons“ which entirely differs in the language employed from „The Last Days of Pompeii“. The style of Disraeli is both elevated, and extremely simple, two qualities rarely combined in the same author, one instance of which is the following. „He looked around; it was Venetia. Never had he beheld such a beautiful vision. She was muffled up in her dressing gown, her small white feet only guarded from the cold by her slippers. Her golden hair seemed to reach her waist, her cheek was flushed, her large blue eyes glittering with tears.“ A pleasing picture of grace and elegance couched in simple language, as is his wont;

*) Page 136 Tauchnitz. Ed.

no high-flown words, no extreme adulations seeking to carry the reader beyond the pale of the natural and the real. And thus ends the first scene in the drama of life which the author presents to our notice, from which the Edinburgh reviewers have given an extract.*)

§ IX.

(Chap. XIII to XVIII.) The death of the mother occurs at a date much anterior to the time of life in which the poet experienced this loss. This has been for many reasons thus arranged by the author.

1. The continuance of the mother in the narrative would not have blended well with the events afterwards recounted and the particular points which he wished to bring into notice.

2. He wishes to contrast very forcibly the expressions of youthful gratitude and affection, and the years of negligence of the young Cadurcis, of his early friends and home.

3. In these earlier chapters he brings into play the fonder and most admirable parts of the character of his hero.

4. He wishes to dismiss Mrs. Cadurcis from the history, having well played her part, and show what Byron might have been, if he had been surrounded by good advisers, and had followed what he knew to be good, instead of evil; plunging himself into error and folly.

Although the death of the mother is transferred to the childhood of the poet, in point of time, much that happened on the occasion of this event, is traced, while much of the peculiar conduct of Byron from which a portion of the account is derived is of

*) Portions of houses being shut up it may here be remarked, is not of unfrequent occurrence. There is a house now in Regents Park one room of which has been for many years closed. On ascending the staircase and proceeding along the landing a large wardrobe is to be seen completely covering a door opening into the secret room, the existence of which is to most observers unknown. It is reported that if this room be at any time opened, the consequence will be, the forfeiture of the lease, which is a very long one. Another of these mysterious chambers was brought to light in the following manner. The possessor of the mansion wished to have a boudoir constructed for his wife, and an architect was consulted as to the most appropriate place for it to be built. Having inspected the building he declared his conviction that there must be another room in the house, and on making an aperture in one of the walls a room was discovered with two skeletons; the one of a female sitting in a chair; the other of a man who had evidently been kneeling before her. There was also a weapon close beside him on the ground.

course omitted having in it no interest but that it was in the highest degree extraordinary and quite inappropriate in recounting the actions of the subject of the story.

The way in which our author treats of it portrays his genius in embellishing his materials, and thereby delighting his readers; and so well this, as his handling of the other personages he introduces to our notice, precludes the thought of his being a mere copyist.

The author attributes the death of the mother, or at least its being hastened to the shock she received from the conduct of her son. The death of Mrs. Byron was accelerated by the outburst of one of her accustomed rages, on receiving the bills of the upholsterer.

Of course it naturally occurred to the writer that the former cause would add more effect to what he relates, and he therefore thus describes the scene.

*The little room where he kept his books being his chief retreat at home, he desired the fire to be kept in, a request which the mother opposed. Again he shows up the selfcontrol of the boy, which only aggravated the mother more, a selfcontrol which was not at all foreign to the temperament of Byron. Then follow the storms with the incongruous answers of the mother, and the repartee of the son adroitly brought in; the climax of rage, and his threatening to live with his mother no longer if she ever struck him again. In Byron's letters he sometimes expresses a very similar confiction; that it is impossible for him and his mother to live together, and perhaps this sentence and the speedy flight of the son, which occasioned so much anxiety, and finally resulted in the death of the mother was suggested by the flight of Byron, when he wrote to his friends and told them that he did not wish to be chased round the country, and that his address was to be kept secret from Mrs. B. And the quarrel, the final quarrel thus described is taken from actual fact of which Byron writes „Oh! for the pen of Ariosto to rehearse in epic, the scolding of that momentous eve.“**) We read in his letter from Piccadilly of the 9. Aug. 1806 words containing so much sarcasm, upon the subject, and drawing so amusing a picture of his mother, and the astonished witnesses of her fury, that it seems strange that on returning to England, the same letterwriter could have shown

*) Chap. XIII.

**) Moore L. of B. (1860) P. 34.

such affection and interest in her, and declare that she was the only person in all England whom he desired so see. Through the vigilance of his mother however she found out his place of abode, and was soon with him; here again the more generous side of his character relented, and there was a more amicable settlement of differences.

The gipsy party described in the fourteenth chapter is a thought of the author, to enliven the story, exhibiting the way in which such a youth as Byron would have acted under similar circumstances, and introducing another passing love scene, of which the life of Byron from childhood was so replete. The description of a gipsy encampment is a lively addition to the story. It is not very probable that the wary leader of the troop of gipsies should immediately seek to sell the pony of the young fugitive, and he himself come into the town for this purpose. Although sometimes when a deed to be reprimanded has been committed, there seems a subtle influence which causes the perpetrators or others immediately concerned in it to do what less sly people would avoid, and to overlook what would be almost plain to the understanding of a child. In fact there seems to be a kind of providence which causes the robber to betray himself, the fugitive to scatter traces of his flight, so that there is not anything unreasonable in giving this turn to the course of events related. There are not those hairbreadth escapes which we read of in the works of Jules Vernes, with a boyish sort of pleasure, feeling that their only object is to amuse. Nor throughout the whole novel are there those very unlikely meetings, just at the right moment of time, which by some authors seem almost laboured into the thread of their stories.

Again, the affecting account of the mother waking and inquiring for her son, and being told that Dr. Masham was expected the next morning with the young lord, she said it would be too late, having a foreboding not uncommon in the last hours of life. This too is very similar to the circumstances of the death of Mrs. Byron.*) Her son having been long absent wrote to her, expressing his wish to return to Newstead, being only detained by literary pursuits and legal business with Mr. Hanson. Mrs. Byron who being very corpulent was easily affected by a comparatively slight illness became indisposed. However when her son wrote to her telling her of his intention of visiting her, she seems not to have been seriously ill. It is not strange that on his going

*) Moore L. of B. (1860) P. 126.

abroad she should think it probable that she should never see him again, especially as he projected travelling to very distant countries, and assigned no definite limit to the time he expected to be absent from his native land. But it is remarkable, that when he again reached England and expected speedily to visit Newstead, that she should have exclaimed „If I should be dead before Byron comes down, what a strange thing it would be!“ When she was suddenly in a more perilous condition, Lord Byron being informed of it, hurried to the spot, but was too late to find his mother alive.

The representation of the grief of the boy on finding that his mother had died in his absence, is to a large extent borrowed from the similar occurrence in the life of Byron. Having little intercourse with Lord Carlisle, his former guardian, and living his singular life of seclusion, and having for companions special literary friends, but no settled home, he felt that the only relation, who had any real interest in him was his mother; the past was forgotten, and all the faults of the departed relation, and if but for a moment, he betrayed his grief. The same day on which he arrived at Newstead, as night came on he entered the room where his deceased mother lay, and his sighs were heard by the waiting-woman who was passing at the time. She found him sitting in the dark by the bed-side. She ventured to encourage him not to yield himself up to such unrestrained grief on which he burst into tears and replied to her „Oh Mrs. B., I had but one friend in the world, and she is gone!“*) The real facts are too appropriate to the story to be omitted by the author, so with very few alterations he almost quotes the account in the life of Byron relating that Cadurcis retired, as evening drew on to his mother's room. Mistress Pauncefort represents the waiting-woman, and words of encouragement are put into her mouth with the same authoritative mien as in the real history, and the young orphan is then represented as saying words not very much differing from those of the sceptical Byron „Ah! Mrs. Pauncefort, God had only given me one friend in this world and there she lies.“

There are many singular occurrences in the source of our authors descriptions which would be quite out of place in ‚Venetia‘. For instance that Byron instead of following the funeral watched it pass from the abbey, and then returned to his usual favourite amusement of boxing which he seems to have pursued with more

*) Moore L. of B. P. 127 (Murray 1860).

than usual vehemence probably seeking to drown his feelings; for this bravado is not at all a proof that his feelings had grown cold, since his arrival at Newstead.

Even in the life of Mrs. Byron there is an indication of a fitful love, and a proud interest in her son. She showed the utmost desire for his fame and literary glory, collecting all the criticisms as they appeared in the several reviews. This jealous fondness is admirably presented in the tale, and in fact the whole is an excellent moral portrait of the lady whom it really exhibits to our view.

§. X.

The young Cadurcis is at the wish of his guardian sent to Eton, not to Harrow, which is probably so arranged in the story to avoid, in cases where no advantage is to be gained therefrom, approaching too close to the original. And as the mother of the poet was living, Byron did not as in the tale before us the young Cadurcis did, return during the holidays to his guardian. This is so contrived in order to bring out his ingratitude, as well as to draw him away from the notice of the reader so as to introduce the interesting account of the entering into the secret room, and the emotions of Venetia on seeing a painting representing her father; in fact to bring more prominently forward the real heroine of the tale, who had hitherto played a somewhat subordinate part, while the young lord and his remarkable mother had absorbed the principal interest. In fact Lord Carlisle the guardian of Byron evinced a most noticeable disregard for the object of his care, so that the allusions to the guardian as a distant personage in the earlier chapters; Mrs Cadurcis remarking „I never heard such a ridiculous idea in my life as a boy like you writing letters on such subjects to a person you have never yet seen“ is perfectly true to life. He certainly did at the request of Dr. Glennie seek to interpose and prevent the frequent interruptions occasioned by the mother, but otherwise saw little and seemed to care little about the welfare of his protégé on one occasion however he went so far as to write to Dr. Drury, the head master of Harrow, desiring to see him in town respecting his ward and to inform him that the prospects of Lord Byron were not great pecuniarily and he inquired respecting his progress and what abilities he possessed. When the Doctor replied „He has talents my Lord which will add lustre to his rank“ „Indeed“ responded his Lordship, but even this assurance did not arouse more interest in the boy committed to his charge. The conduct of Carlisle was almost

insulting on the occasion of Byron's coming of age, and taking his seat in the House*), perhaps somewhat, but not entirely occasioned by the unrestrained life which the young lord led. On receiving his letter reminding him of the fact, it being customary for a young peer to be introduced by one of the older members, he wrote a cold and formal reply, informing Byron of all technicalities to be observed, but took no further notice of the application.

But the most reprehensible action of his guardian and one which but reveals a meanness of spirit which calls forth indignation is, that when the young lord who had at least a right to expect to be treated with civility and justice, was for a time prevented from taking his seat, because there was no regular certificate of the marriage of Miss Trevanion with Admiral Byron, in consequence of the ceremony having taken place in the private chapel at Carhais, he refused to offer the explanation which it was in his power to give, and furnish the particulars desired*). The poet to some extent retaliated this contemptible procedure in his treatment of the name of Carlisle in his satire. So that the guardian, who in the story is only casually mentioned and forms only a link in the concatenation of events is not altogether a reproduction in his conduct to his charge. Disraeli therefore ascribes the development of his political opinions to the care of his guardian, his strong passions and prejudices, and further on speaks of his piety and devotion to religion. This is not only deviating from the unhappy realities of the model; for Byron acquired his scepticism at school which was strengthened by his association with Matthews when at Cambridge; but it is not consistent with probability, and probably what the Ed. Rev. designates „improbable changes of conduct“, that having left the home of Lady Annabel, and grown almost to manhood he should still have retained so much fervour and devotion to religion and more serious things, and then afterwards become such a thoughtless reprobate. It must be owned that not only young politicians but even those more advanced in life are often „as little inclined to recognise the existence of truth“ outside the circle of opinions in which they live. We are in this reminded of the scurrilous words which equally charmed many of the conservative party, and shocked the liberals, uttered by our illustrious author, when at the climax of his influence

*) Moore L. of B. P. 75 (1860).

**) Moores L. of B. P. 77.

and power, in opposition to the great leader who has succeeded him and still holds the position of Prime Minister of the Nation.

For the above mentioned reason the school life, with its studies and associates is passed over in comparative silence which forms so distinctive a topic in the life of Byron; for in this little world, a large English school, in which the struggle is almost greater for many of its inmates than in the after life in the world itself Byron was a defender of the weak and discouraged the injustice and brutality of those by whom he was surrounded.

§ XI.

Referring to Book II. The second book presents to our notice a new scene, Venetia discovering the portrait of her father. It is the most beautiful part of the whole work, and therefore though it has only an indirect reference to the young Cadurcis, it demands consideration. It is more appropriate in its parts, and probable in its issue than the account of the meeting of the father. Its descriptions are most vivid and poetical. The words „The black clouds were scudding along the sky, revealing in their occasional but transient rifts, some glimpses of the moon that seemed unusually bright; or of a star that trembled with supernatural brilliancy. She stood a while gazing on the outward scene that harmonized with her own internal agitation; her grief was like the storm, her love like the light of that bright moon and star“. Remind us of those expressing a similar thought by Thomas Bell.

„It was an eve of raw and surly mood.

And there, within a turret high of ancient Holirood

Sat Mary listening to the rain and sighing at the winds.

That seemed to suit the stormy state of mens uncertain minds“.

In fact the author has in the most charming diction and elegance, mirrored the feelings of the graceful Venetia in the nature which was around her, or contrasted the bright and smiling spring with the sorrow within her.

That Lady Annabel is represented as saging to Dr. Masham „Tell her she has no father; tell her he is dead“*) when she found that the sight of the picture in the secret room had so worked upon the feelings of her daughter, that in her delirium she vowed to go to her father, and was constantly speaking of him; is not in accordance with the rectitude of character of that lady, who had been so good an adviser to the youth so suddenly

*) Book II Chap. VIII p. 192.

left an orphan. She urges her request and says. „We'll tell her he is dead“. For it is rarely the case that any so pious, even under the most distressing circumstances, would thus venture to assert that which was untrue; and the whole of the rest of her conduct, except her allusion to roaming over dusty unfurnished rooms when she knew that they were well furnished according to her special directions, was guided by every feeling of honour. But this forms a very small part of the otherwise estimable account.

§ XII.

Referring to Book III. Chap. I. Then follows the return of Cadurcis commencing with a description of his personal appearance, and character, being borrowed from the model which the author portrays. It is as Byron is delineated at a time when he captivated the hearts of so many youthful and inexperienced ladies, by his appearance and his talents; which is all fully brought out by our author in the course of the story. He is shown as Macaulay describes Byron; „the gaze of a hundred drawing-rooms, the acclamations of the whole nation, the applause of applauded men, the love of lovely women, all this world and all the glory of it — — — offered to a youth to whom nature had given violent passions, and whom education had never taught to control them“.*)

His boldness and courage, his feats of swimming which he mentions with such gusto in his letters to his mother; the accounts also of his travels are not interwoven into the tale, to any large extent, although he is represented as visiting the very places where Byron resided. But the author seems to place before us an ideal rather than to copy from the original; the young man which Byron might have been, and of which he at times showed some inclination to be, rather than what he really was. We can well apply to Byron the words describing the emotions of Cadurcis when he returned to the abbey. He had neglected the friends of his early youth, and his letters had become few and afterwards entirely discontinued. Yet he still had a fond memory for the old scenes and associations, and as he slowly directed his way through the woods and Park of Cherbury and saw himself „transported to the old haunts of his innocent and warm-hearted childhood, he sighed for a finer and a sweeter sympathy than

*) Macaulay's Essays. Moore's Life of Byron.

was ever yielded by the roof which he had lately quitted — a habitation, but not a home“.*)

Thus he is again brought before us as entering Cherbury once more. To his frank but fitful mind the old thoughts recur. We are in this reminded of Byron's return to his native country and his expression of satiety in all his wanderings, emotions which like the colours in a soap bubble are perpetually changing, and with the slightest passing wind disappear entirely. So in a masterly way the author describes the return of Cadurcis to a house from which he had received so much kindness; the place where he had known real sympathy and a tender affection, which unhappily never fell to the lot of Byron. This the young Lord is described as having much neglected, and having passed from one mode of life to another, as readily as the flitting views of a panorama; proving the truth of the Italian proverb „Lontani dagli occhi, lontani dal cuore“. His friendly greeting of Mistress Pauncefort is quite in accordance with the hearty and elastic temperament of the great poet. So he ever showed the greatest regard to the old servants of his uncle; and was often known to fill a glass of wine and hand it to the old servant, who stood behind his chair, with the utmost cordiality; and for this man he had an affection, which is rarely to be found between master and a man in waiting.

§ XIII.

(Chap. V to VII.) In this description of the character of Cadurcis, or of Lord Byron, only differing in some of its circumstances, and moulded by its somewhat different surroundings, the author leads us to the threshold, where he depicts his hero leaving the old associations, leaving behind him as a thing of the past the good influences which had surrounded his youth, and wildly rushing into a totally different course of life. He describes in glowing language his walk home alone from Cherbury, his lingering and musing upon the solemn scene and solaced by the endearing associations abandoning the dreams of ambition which sometimes urged him forwards. He wondered why he should ever leave a spot so sacred in his memory, and wondered why he should not live continually in the associations of innocence and purity. Such regrets and sentiments were often passing through the mind of Byron and the reflection

*) Page 216 Tau. Ed.

which the author makes that „If ever there existed a being who was his own master, — who might mould his destiny at his will, — it seemed to be Cadurcis. His lone yet independent situation, — his impetuous yet firm volition, — alike qualified him to achieve the career most grateful to his disposition;“*) is equally applicable to the illustrious model from which the materials of this part of the story are gathered. True to his copy Disraeli represents him, though knowing what is right, following the evil, and being entirely led away if not captivated by a vague philosophy, and a specious infidelity. He is equally restrained by the good in his youth, and led on by profligate women and dissipated companions in his after life.

We will pass over with little comment, the events spoken of at this time; the very natural remarks of the servants concerning the attentions of Cadurcis to Venetia and all the usual accompaniments on such occasions which resulted in the strong desire of Lady Annabel to see him one day her son-in-law, which was so great a contrast to her after conduct. Venetia abiding by the old agreement, that the young lord was to take the place of a brother to her, and failing to understand the passionate admiration of a lover, or to appreciate the change which years had brought about; is aptly displayed, and adds colour to the scene.

The remonstrances of Dr. Masham although forming a perfectly natural turn in the course of events pursued, assuring the young Cadurcis that he cannot, at so early an age know his own mind, and advising him to go for a time to Cambridge, remind us somewhat of the words of warning which Byron received, and words of reproof. One of these was given in a very curious manner, which he himself related to Captain Medwin, „Somebody he says, „possessed Madame de Stael with an opinion of my immorality — — — — — she invited me to a family dinner, and I found the room full of strangers, who had come to stare at me. — — — Madame de Stael took the liberty to read me a lecture before the crowd.“ Many were the words of counsel and letters of admonition to which Byron politely and often with expression of evident feeling replied, but they produced no effect upon his moral character. Perhaps he did throughout his life retain some fond memory for Miss Chaworth, whom not only as a boy, but in after life he saw again, and not without evident emotion. But it is probable that even if he had obtained that lady for his wife, the

*) Page 225 Tau. Ed.

domestic happiness would have been of short duration. In referring to the disposition and actions of this marvellously illustrious man, I am traading on tender ground. It must however be admitted that much in the circumstances which surrounded his path might have led him in the ways of rectitude, and I cannot therefore sympathise with the words of Sir Egerton Brydges, and the whole tenor of his remarks, which would lead to the supposition that Byron's faults were almost, or at least to some extent unavoidable, and very much to be palliated, if not entirely excused on the ground of his many misfortunes. He so utterly disregarded all usages of society, and was so little troubled with visits from his fellow noblemen, that he might well have lived in the utmost comfort, instead of falling into a most pitiable state of debt, and being reduced to the necessity of selling the abbey. Perhaps few men have had so many warnings; to few men has the voice of God in his providence; and the voice of man in actual words been so continually addressed as to this boasting sceptic. This is not so forcibly brought out in our narrative as in the real life, although the folly of his course and the feebleness of his infidel philosophy is commented upon, and all his misanthropic schemes are in a moment brought to naught.

On the other hand the character of Venetia, her bewilderment on finding that Cadurcis had other thoughts, beyond the brotherly affection of their earlier days; and the simplicity of her replies is like the rest of that which in the story relates to her, and not the reproduction of one of the many love-scenes of our poet's eventful mortal career.

And then we have the musings of Cadurcis in the abbey by night, and his reflections upon fame all centered in himself — alone for his own gratification. „The applause of nations — there was something grand and exciting in such a possession. To be the marvel of mankind what would he not hazard?“ This is equally characteristic of the original, with the affected contempt with which he spoke of such honours in after life. This wide spread popularity referring to which Henry Reed of Philadelphia, says, „His song had larger audience over the earth, and on that audience it exerted an unwonted fascination, swaying the feelings of multitudes, and making its words and its music familiar on their lips. It was popularity too quick grown to last without a large diminution“*) and it is true of Byron more than of most other men

*) Henry Reed's Introd. to Engl. Lit. from Chaucer to Tennyson (John F. Shaw, London).

who have met with literary success, what Lake remarks in his „Life of Byron“ that, „such is the man of quick and exalted powers of imagination: his fancy over-estimates the object of his wishes; and pleasure, fame, distinction, are alternately pursued, attained, and despised when in his power.“

§ XIV.

Having special reference to Chap. VII. Byron attributes the impulse which he received to poetical compositions to the cause, which in the case of many men who have been noted, has first invoked the muse. During his vacations while he was at Harrow, he visited at the house of his uncle Admiral Parker and became attached to his cousin Margaret Parker whom he describes in his usual glowing language „I do not recollect“, he writes, „scarcely any thing equal to the transparent beauty of my cousin, or to the sweetness of her temper, during the short period of our intimacy. She looked as if she had been made out of a rainbow — all beauty and peace.“*) He describes her after having received an accident in attending her sister Augusta, who was in consumption and thereby injuring her spine and being affected by the same malady. And he continues to relate that his sister went to see her when she was nearing her end, and happened to mention his name; and adds „Margaret coloured through the paleness of mortality to the eyes.“ Referring to this event he says „My first dash into poetry was as early as 1800. It was the ebullition of a passion for my first cousin Margaret Parker.“**) Of course many things may have conduced to excite the imagination, and stimulate the ambition of the poet, whose success was so rapidly acquired, and who as rapidly became the subject of reproach, and the byword of the multitude. No doubt the two principles were at work which are shown to advantage by our author, in the meeting of Cadurcis and Venetia in the garden in the early morning. On that occasion she expressed her resolve to be married to no one but a great man and a poet; which occurrence was the turning point in the life of the hero of the tale. For the great secret of the celebrity so quickly gained, and like a cloud carried over by the storm, so quickly passing away is the fact, that Byron possessed of unusual talents, although showing some spurts of kindness or

*) Moore L. of B. (1860) P. 18.

**) Moore L. of B. (Murray 1860) P. 17.

generosity if it may be thus termed; lived, and wrote, entirely for himself; to gratify his desires, to satiate his ambition, and to sacrifice everything to his baneful eccentricities. Disraeli brings us to the turning point in the history of the young Cadurcis, and skilfully makes use, in the first place of the effect of the picture of Venetia's father on the daughter adding, „the fair! the serene Venetia! the young, the inexperienced Venetia! pausing, as it were, on the parting threshold of girlhood, whom but a few hours since, he had fancied could scarcely have proved a passion;“ He has already portrayed the admirer being wrought up to a degree of excitement with his hopes of future glory, mingled with his adorations of the object of his love; coming in the morning and hoping to hear a favourable answer to his solicitations.

In a moment his voice completely altered and turns to a tone of bitter reproach, and continues in words of scorn, of which we find so many, in Byron's reflections upon the separation from his wife. There is a greater dignity about the retorts of Venetia; but the same relentless spirit devoted to her father, and when she heard his name associated with the most abandoned and profligate, and all possible ignominy heaped upon him, whose image she had seen represented with youthful vigour and soul inspiring countenance; fired with indignation she addressed him as an ill-mannered boy!“ and turning her back upon him without a parting word went into the house. Thus we have described that which spurred the young genius on to a course which won for him such transient fame. So the real history of the poet, and the narrative of Cadurcis represents the young man disappointed in early love; his devotion to the object of his affections treated with ridicule; and the same boasting resolves being uttered as the young hero stands upon the verge of manhood and exclaims „When she spoke I might have been a boy; I am a boy no longer. — — — I will be a man, and a great man!“

§ XV.

Referring specially to Book IV Ch. II; Book V Ch. IV; Book II Ch. IV. In reading the account of Marmion Herbert we are lead to ask whether a portion of the life of Byron has been transferred from the hero of the tale, who is represented as never marrying, to the husband of Lady Annabel. And this is really to a great extent the case, and this is the cleverest use of his materials which the author has made. We are first introduced to the portrait of Marmion Herbert „a man in the very spring of

sunny youth". He is represented as standing in the midst of a park. Then the countenance is described, with the powerful expression, the thoughtful looks and the piercing glance. Although there was much in the appearance of Byron which was fascinating; though it may be said that his „eyes, large and yet deep, beamed with a spiritual energy“ well calculated to call forth the emotions of passionate affection and devotion in one so inexperienced as was Venetia, yet he had not golden locks; and in fact the whole delineation is due to the imagination of the describer. The fact however of a concealed portrait is taken from the true history, as well as the curtain of green silk which covered it.)*

It is a remarkable fact that not only many men of genius but some who have had dreams of aiding mankind, by their literary productions, such as Milton, and Shakespeare, and Dante should have been such unworthy husbands. Moore in referring to this fact writes, „The truth is, I fear, that rarely, if ever, have men of the higher order of genius shown themselves fitted for the calm affections and comforts that form the cement of domestic life.“ Pope goes still further describing his own ideal and that of unhappy literary men, and asserts that „To follow poetry as one ought one must forget father and mother and cleave to it alone“. Fortunately there are many examples which prove the contrary. The real fault is shown in the words of Ebert in his „Life of Byron“, who has taken a thoroughly unbiased view of the whole matter. He continues „Aber auch er trägt gleiche Schuld. Er war keine fittliche Natur, den Entschluß die Sünde zu meiden, hatte er niemals mit Ernst gefaßt*).“ We have no recital of the precise circumstances under which Lady Annabel was left, but the account agrees with the model, in this respect that it was shortly after marriage.

We are somewhat reminded of the correspondence, which Byron sustained with Moore; in the fears, and hopes, and circumstances recounted of Dr. Masham who in the story takes the place of Moore in actual fact. Byron wrote frequently to his biographer mentioning the subject of the marriage; and Moore notwithstanding his misgivings, had like Dr. Masham hoped that the matrimonial tie would effect a change in Byron's mode of life and thoughts. On the 10th. Jan. 1815, Byron wrote to Mr. Moore, very cheerfully with a P. S. „Lady Byron is vastly well**): on the 2d. Feb. 1815 he wrote in a most satisfied manner of his married state,

*) Medwin Jour. of Con. of L. B. page 98.

**) Lord Byron von Dr. Felix Ebert Leipzig 1879 (Page 278.)

***) Moore L. of B. P. 273.

In other letters he seems to be in a cheerful mood: in that of the 21st. May „Lady B. is better than three mounths advanced in her proress towards maternity“ and on the 31st. Oct. „P. S. Lady B. is in full proress“ &c.; and on the 5th. Jan. 1816 he wrote to Moore, informing him with great delight of the birth af a child. These circumstances were borne in mind by the author, and summed up in the words „Lady Annabel, however was always mentioned with regard, and an intimation had been duly given to the Doctor that she was in a delicate and promising situation*)“; and „a letter shortly after received from Herbert, dated from the castle, written in high spirits, informing him that Annabel had made him the happy father of the most beautiful little girl in the world“.

The character of Miss Milbanke is also reproduced; a very orthodox person; gentle and simple in her manners, and expression, but with a determined will and fully convinced as to the course she pursued, determining never to rejoin her husband. For the overtures of reconciliation which Byron offered were rejected. He describes Miss Milbanke as being different from the frivolous and gaudily dressed ladies in the society in which he first met her. And after describing her personal appearance he adds, „There was a simplicity, a retired modesty about her, which was very characteristic, and formed a happy contrast to the cold artificial formality and studied stiffness which is called fashion: she interested me exceedingly**“. And notwithstanding he had forebodings speaking himself, of the presentiments which brought to his mind the „demon of socrates“ and the names if Monk, Lewis, and Napoleon. Although it is certain that both parties were to blame; for neither Miss Milbanke nor her family could have been ignorant of the wild career of the poet, the position of debt into which his follies and eccentricities had reduced him; and with all his frankness and abhorrence to falsehood, his total want of appreciation of some of the most sacred ties.

This of course is not brought out in the narrative; because, while the circumstances of the marriage, separation, and voluntary exile are mirrored from the life of Byron; the philosophical mind, and chimerical idealism of Marmion Herbert are entirely suggested by the short mortal career, as well as the works of Shelley. This is most clearly shown in that part of the story, where Herbert

*) Book IV Chap. II P. 290 Jan. Ed.

**) Medwin Jour. of Con. of L. B. P. 36.

and Cadureis meet and talk about philosophical and philanthropical subjects, just as Byron and Shelley used to do, when they met upon the Lake of Geneva. This however will be more fully treated of in due course.

Lady Annabel is therefore represented as one who by the tender expressions and fair words of the professed lover, had been deceived. The Quarterly Review of 1831 remarks upon the actions of Byron „It is sufficiently obvious, that Lord Byron did not solicit Miss Milbanke's hand under the influence of any thing which could deserve the name of love; and we fear it must also be admitted, that he entered on matrimonial life, not only without any serious consideration of the solemn and sacred obligations he was taking upon him but — — — — — very slightly tinged — — — — — with those feelings — — — — — which, even where it is too late for the high and delicate romance of an unwasted life, spring up naturally on such occasions — — (towards) the woman who, in the freshness of youth and innocence surrenders her all to a manly bosom.“ In the youth of Venetia the name of her father was carefully avoided, and Disraeli traces the first curiosity of the, child asking whether her mother were a widow*) to the longing desire not only to see her father, but that he should form a portion of the family circle. When she had discovered the secret, and elicited the fact from Dr. Masham that he was yet alive; she was told by him that he was utterly unworthy of her mother, to which she replies that there must be some misunderstanding, and cannot believe that he is what all around her represent him to be: althought „a genius and a poet;“ a man „who has violated every tie, and derided every principle, by which society is maintained; whose life is a living illustration of his own shameless doctrines.“ Then follows the dread of Lady Annabel that one day her daughter should see her father and the constant conviction that he was gaining more power over her affections. The father is described as thinking often and tenderly of his child, but expressing his full determination not to take her away from the mother. This is all skilfully interwoven into the novel as well as the pathos and affection which Byron felt for his child, Ada, to whom the author has given the name of Venetia, which emotions the great poet effused into his poetical productions as also many of his causes of sorrow. „They tell me she is like me“ exclaimed Byron to Medwin as he earnestly regarded his

*) Chap. V Page 64, Tauch. Ed.

daughter's miniature, an expression which our author makes use of as causing fear to the mind of the mother. When she found her father, and seemed inclined to go with him if the mother would not follow, she still felt that Venetia was more like her father than her mother. Byron's further remarks have given the data for this part of the story, which must be quoted verbatim „Perhaps I am wrong“, he writes, „in letting Lady Byron have entirely her own way in her education. I hear that my name is not mentioned in her presence; that a green curtain is always kept over my portrait, as over something forbidden; and that she is not to know that she has a father till she comes of age. Of course she will be taught to hate me; she will be brought up to it. Lady Byron is conscious of all this, and is afraid that I shall some day carry off her daughter by stealth or force“.*) These words of Byron are unfolded into the most striking part of the narrative, many of the expressions therein contained are made use of, such as the child being taught to hate him, and the principal points are developed. In many single passages in „Venetia“ we are reminded of them, for instance Lady Annabel's words to Dr. Masham „He said she never could be taught to hate him. I did not teach her to hate him. I said nothing.“ Herbert when after years of separation he meets his daughter**) in his expressions of love adds „The father, I fear, she has been bred up to hate“. And similar sentences occur frequently. Byron continues „I had rather be unhappy myself than make her mother so; probably I shall never see her again; referring to his right to claim her if he wished. And we read similar words in „Venetia“, „I yield her to you, Annabel' said Herbert, placing Venetia in her mother's arms' — — — — she is yours;“ and again „O! Annabel' said Herbert may not this child be some atonement — this child of whom I solemnly declare I would not deprive you“, His Lordship in his remarks to his friends, just like Herbert in the narrative expressed regret at the past, acknowledging that if he had been a little more inclined to yield in some ways they might have been happy; which no doubt suggested some of the relenting remarks of the husband and his whole repentant behaviour which he manifested to his wife, Lady Annabel. But of course the meeting, so pathetically described never took place. Herbert was engaged in a war for freedom from what was regarded as a foreign yoke

*) Medwin Jour. of Con. of L. B. P. 98.

**) Vol. II Book V Chap. IV.

in the new world; while Byron fired with similar notions of bettering the state of his fellow creatures died, scarcely arrived at the prime of life in the midst of the struggles of an ancient and once famed nation, leaving to the last moments the messages to his wife and child, and then uttering words about them which were not understood. Byron on one occasion wrote a letter which he intended to be sent to Lady Byron in which the words occur „You and your child are provided for. Live and prosper — I wish so much to both. Live and prosper — you have the means.“^{*)} Soon after he heard with just indignation of her taking a prominent part at a ball given for charitable purposes.

The account of the elegantly bound book, which Venetia found in the secret room and the ode which it contained,^{**)} is very effective, and well handled; being in reality an appropriate application of the opening lines of the third canto of *Childe Harold*, which like the above mentioned poem is really an address to his daughter

„Is thy face like thy mother's my fair child!

Ada! sole daughter of my house and heart?

When last I saw thy young blue eyes they smiled,

And then we parted, — not as now we part,

But with a hope.“

There are other portions of *Childe Harold* which suggested to the author the aspect of Herbert on meeting again his wife

„He, who grown aged in this world of woe,

In deeds, not years, piercing the depths of life,“

The words however in the poem „On the Night our Daughter was borne“^{***)} are not like these of Byron. The circumstances were so very different; the latter being at the time they were written far away from his native land, and separated from his wife, while Marmion Herbert is represented as composing his, shortly before their separation, and his taking his departure from England, to go to Italy.

§ XVI.

(B. IV Ch. I; B. V Ch. VI; B. IV Ch. II.) Then through the introduction of Lady Monteagle into the narrative, the author

*) Moore L. of B. (Murray 1860) P. 534.

**) Book II Chap. IV.

***) Book II Chap. V.

shows up the general opinions respecting the works of the poet. One of these Ladies who always read the latest works of light literature, and profess more than others to grasp the thoughts of great man is presented to our notice. Mr. Pole*) is quite of a different opinion, as not a few men of letters are, respecting the writings of Byron, and accuses him of writing „a lampoon on the royal family“.

The Regent being present in an evening private assembly, or party, where Byron was, he sent a gentleman to the poet desiring that he should be presented to him. He had been particularly pleased with „Childe Harold's Pilgrimage“. In a letter to Lord Holland, Byron describes his meeting the Regent, and writing to Sir Walter Scott he reflects thus upon the circumstance „This interview“ he writes „was accidental. I never went to the levee; for having seen the courts of Mussulman and Catholic sovereigns my curiosity was sufficiently allayed; and my politics being as perverse as my rhymes, I had, in fact no business there.“**) It is reported that soon afterwards, the Prince's favourable disposition towards him was averted as he suffered himself to write and speak not very respectfully of him.

Mr. Pole expresses his wish that the poet would study Pope: Byron however introduced a style of his own. Stopford A. Brooke in his „English Literature“***) says of Byron that there was something in his writings of the school of Pope, but that he belonged partly to the past and partly to the present; but that the things he narrates as well as the philosophy he propounds are all centered around the personal pronoun I. He describes himself in almost all his poems, until not only the public but the poet is weary of this incessant I. Now just as in regarding on individual one will consider a particular point, such as the features; another the general contour and expression; so critics are often apt to notice one special phase, and disregard the rest, and thus Mr. Pole is represented as doing, commenting on Cadurcis literary productions with the unmeasured terms, Exaggerated passion, bombastic language, egotism to excess“. He next attacks what is most prominent in the latter Poems of Byron; and adds „mixed with a commonplace scepticism and impossible morals, and a sort of vague dreamy philosophy, which, if it mean anything, means

*) B. IV. Ch. I.

**) Moore L. of B. (Murray 1860) P. 165.

***) English Literature by the Rev. Stopford Brooke M. A. Ed. by John. R. Green M. A. London Macmillan and Co. 1876.

atheism". And if the great poet was fitful and the course of his, in a literary sense, splendid career of authorship, was subject to both praise and severe reproach, perhaps few works have been at the same time so admired as poetical effusions and so censured as a prostitution of genius and self-degradation as the ribald poem *Don Juan*. There were at the time when Byron's praise as a poet was most widely and justly celebrated those who, as now, were unable to discover its beauty. As Morley remarks, it is at a time when the minds of men are most stirred that the highest utterance is made manifest in its Literature*). He expresses more pointedly a thought which Taine, an entertaining but superficial French writer on the English Literature has suggested and carried out in his work on this subject „On a decouvert qu'une litteraire n'est pas un simple jeu d'imagination — — — mais une copie des moeurs environnantes et le signe d'un état d'esprit". This thought was present in the minds of men though not handed down to us in exactly similar language when the Golden Age of Latin literature was passing away. For we find Tacitus in his *Dialogues* „de Oratoribus" quoting the question often proposed by Justus Fabius „Cur cum priora saecula tot eminentium oratorum ingeniis gloriaque floruerit, nostra potissimum aetas deserta et laude eloquentiae orbata vix nomen ipsum oratoris retineat".**)

Morley continues „The genius of Byron represented the whole passionate movement of the Revolutionary time, and most clearly expressed sympathy with the nations who desired to throw off tyranny and be themselves". In these few words Morley has expressed the character of Byron, the state of Europe at the time, when he flourished, and the influences which actuated him when he wrote. Macaulay also writes in sympathy with this idea,***) in entering upon a consideration of the poetry of Byron, and refers to the fact that a particular style of genius was in different ages influenced by the circumstances of the times. He tells us it is usually considered „that the poetry of the last century was correct, but cold and mechanical"; but that the poetry of our time was far more imaginative and passionate. „It is said" he adds „that the poets of the age of Elizabeth had far more genius, but far less correctness than those of the age of Ann." He writes of the political dynasties of Shakspeare, Spencer, their followers, and

*) Col. of Brit. Auth. Jauchnitz Ed. page 110.

**) Tac. de Oratoribus Cap. I.

***) Macaulay's Essays Moore's Life of Byron.

these being dethroned by a following genius. In these words still further bringing out this thought.

Mr. Pole then spoke of his „eating only biscuits and calling for soda water“.*) This is also borrowed from actual fact, while Byron at all times had a great dread of becoming, like his mother, very corpulent, and he not only took violent means in his early life to counteract this defect, but submitted to long fastings and then chewed substances to allay the feeling of hunger.**) „Just now I live on Claret and soda-water“. The conversation of Lady Monteagle which elicited this opinion of the works of Cadurcis is quite a sample of the extreme expressions and manner of speaking of this class of English society.

Not only is the personal appearance but the traits of character of Marmion Herbert are purposely not exhibited too nearly approaching the original, and he is brought before us as a man advanced in life although he really in many other respects resembles the unhappy, but illustrious poet, who for some mysterious cause being parted from his wife and daughter was a wanderer and an exile, making the wife of another the countess Guiccioli his partner in life, in „la Mira“. Referring to this Felix Ebert justly remarks.***) „Das Glück, welches beide genossen, ist — mit so glühenden und begeisterten Farben geschildert, daß man nur zu leicht verführt wird, das Verbrecherische eines solchen Verkehrs mit Rücksicht auf die mildernden Umstände zu vergessen“. It was in 1750 that Rousseau produced his essay against the benefits of civilisation and promulgated many of the extraordinary opinions referring to which, Henry Morley in his work on English Literature pointedly remarks; „This outbreak of the emotional part of human nature after long suffering from restraints of a cold formalism had its form determined by Rousseau's genius and eloquence“. The mother of Byron used to say that she thought her son resembled Rousseau,†) and the Edinburgh Review in criticising the fourth Canto of „Childe Harold“ remarks „There are two writers in modern literature whose extraordinary power over the minds of men, it may be truly said, has existed less in their works, than in themselves Rousseau and Lord Byron.

All this is not hinted at in the narrative, but the ideal and

*) Vol I P. 282 Tau. Ed.

**) Medwin Convers. of Lord Byron Page 15.

***) Part II Ch. VII P. 162.

†) Moore L. of B. P. 72.

antichristian notions of such men are exposed, and the inconsistent opinions which are shown in the actions of Byron, who having lived a life of dissipation and so married that a separation within a few months is not to be wondered at, determined to risk money and life and all in a war to emancipate the Greeks. Marmion Herbert is however described as one of those leaders of thought, whose influence was felt shortly before the French Revolution, and is even now manifested in Nihilism, Fenianism, and Socialism, of which the devotees, while they would break up all social, and political ties, which God has constituted for the well-being of mankind, and abandon all worship of the creator through which blessing comes to man, are always ready to offer their lives and fortunes to further their dreams of producing a paradise upon the earth. Of course the similarity with Byron is not thus to be found in the character of Herbert, but only in the facts of the leaving the wife and daughter and going to Italy; and the circumstances connected therewith. The rising Cadurcis is represented as reading his books, not thoroughly understanding them, or taking a very active part with any particular faction. In this as in other respects Disraeli has formed for the occasion a new character resembling Shelley, to be the companion of his hero, who was too gay, had too much feeling, generosity, and generally friendly disposition to adhere in his actions rigidly to his philosophy, although he was captivated with his poetry and genius. We have an account of the College life both of Byron and Herbert, and then follow the travels in Italy. It is to be remarked that in these passing, and various scenes there is not much that is geographically or otherwise instructive, and the political allusions are, unlike most of Disraeli's novels very few and unimportant. The parting of Lady Annabel from her husband, and the consequences of it are precisely similar to Byron's case. For both went to London. The wife went to London and then to her father's house, and then a letter was sent to inform Herbert that she could not return and live with him any longer. The author did not know the exact reason why Lady Byron left her husband, and therefore gives no reason why Lady Annabel left Herbert; there was a mystery about it which many longed to solve, and so he has represented it, remarking,*) „Never was such a hubbub in the world! In vain Herbert claimed his wife, and expressed his astonishment; — — — — The world universally declared

*) B. IV. Ch. II.

Lady Annabel an injured woman, and trusted that she would eventually have the good sense and kindness to gratify them by revealing the mystery". Then the conduct of Herbert is a reproduction of that of Byron. He „having ostentatiously shown himself in every public place, and courted notice and inquiry by every means in his power, to prove that he was not anxious to conceal himself or avoid any inquiry left the country“ establishing himself first in Switzerland. All this is true to the life of Byron but adorned with the author's elegant language, and arrangement of incidents.

§ XVII.

(B. IV Ch. III. IV. IX.) We have next an account of the college days of Lord Cadurcis setting forth that era in the life of Byron, which abounded in eccentricities, although at all times he was unlike other men. Thomas Medwin of the 24th. Light Dragoons, in his *Journal of the Conversation of Lord Byron* describes (page 9) his equipage, which he says consisted of „seven servants, five carriages, nine horses, a monkey, a bull-dog, and a mastiff, two cats, three pea-fowls, and some hens“, he adds that he afterwards bought another monkey. There are traditions of curious deeds connected with great men who studied at Trinity College, Cambridge. Erasmus and the tutor's figs; Johnson in extreme poverty treating with indifference and almost contempt the tutors and dons of the College. Byron, it is now reported at Cambridge, once took some hats and gowns of the dons from a room, where they had been left and clothed some images in the court, where they were after some searching found in the morning. Byron had his atheistical opinions strengthened at Cambridge through the intercourse of another student named Matthews. The author however represents Cadurcis as first imbibing such views at Cambridge, and true to his model, he does not make him a very zealous partisan of anything; passing his time in making poetry, visiting his friends, amusing the ladies, and indulging in the most absurd eccentricities. Moore writes respecting the difference in the early and after life of Byron; „We have seen also, in some of his early unpublished poems how apparent, even through the doubts, that already clouded them are those feelings of tpiety, which a soul like his could not but possess.“*)

Then he author, literally enters into the details of Byron's actions. For instance keeping a bear, and saying that it should stand for a scholarship, which was an actual occurrence.**) In

*) Moore (*Murray* 1860) P. 68.

**) Medwin *Jour. of Con. of L. B. P.* 65. Moore *L. of B. P.* 118.

a letter from Matthews to a lady, we have some description of the inmates, and strange pursuits of those inhabiting Newstead Abbey.*) He says that the place itself is in a most disorderly condition, but those who live there are not much less so. He tells the visitor to be careful in ascending the hall-staircase, and always to go by „broad daylight. To beware of a bear on the right hand or still worse encountering a wolf on the left. He adds; — „Nor when you have attained the door, is your danger over for the hall being decayed, and therefore standing in need of repair, a bevy of inmates are very probably banging at one end of it with their pistols;“

In again introducing Mr. Pole conversing with a lady at the house of Lady Monteagle,**) the author refers to the lines of Cadurcis on a dog, reminding us of Byron's words „Histories are more full of examples of the fidelity of dogs than of friends“, and the sadder and more bitter epitaph.

„To mark a friend's remains these stones arise
I never knew but one and here he lies“.

Then the egostim of the young Lord is shown up, which is such as can easily be imagined. The conversation of Lady Monteagle and the whole scene is not at all overdrawn. Cadurcis again meeting Doctor Masham, and greeting him with cordiality, brings out one phase of the disposition of Byron, which is the respect he entertained in after life for those who had in his early years instructed him. Lady Monteagle engages in conversation with Dr. Masham, and of course seeks to elicit from him some anecdotes about the early life of her admired poet; but he manages to evade her Ladyship's inquiries and hints that he always had some misgivings as to his future conduct. If we take the fourth chapter in the fourth book, of the first volume as a sample, we cannot but feel that the remarks of the Edinburgh Review were given very hastily and inconsiderately. Here are five Persons introduced as principle characters, four of them at least of entirely different mould, and all but one within the range of what is usual and natural. The conversation is spirited, the fitful humours of Cadurcis, the adulations of the hostess, the sarcasm of Mr. Pole, and the good common sense of the bishop all forcibly portrayed. And yet as throughout, the language is simple, and the regular romance-makers turns of expression are happily excluded. It may be

*) Moore L. of B. (Murray 1860) P. 82.

**) B. IV Ch. IV.

urged that it is not likely that the bishop and Cadurcis could so long withdraw themselves from the rest of the society to engage in such earnest conversation, but this is quite possible and affords a fitting opportunity for the bishop to express his conviction of the instability of his former pupil. He uses very similar language to that of Sir Walter Scott „Our sentiments agreed a good deal, except upon the subjects of religion and politics, upon neither of which, I was inclined to believe that Lord Byron entertained very fixed opinions“.*) He continued, to the effect, that Byron's political views seemed to consist in satire and wit against particular persons, rather than any conviction of the truth of what he talked about.

In the ninth chapter we have a reference to the habit of Byron of turning night into day, dining at midnight, and rising in the evening. For a time Byron literally slept in the day-time and rose and carried on his works at night. This is a mode of life which other Englishmen have attempted but not continued for any length of time. For when the novelty of such a way of living had worn away, of course the great object which prompted it was gone. But the habits of Byron were always most irregular. At one time this may have partly arisen from his total isolation from all but a few chosen friends, as well as a want of stability in his character. Matthews describes the course of a visit to Newstead where the party was composed of five counting Lord Byron. He tells us that the table was laid for breakfast and each one came and partook thereof when he had risen, the general hour of getting up in the morning for any of the party being not earlier than one. The breakfast was not cleared away until each as he arrived had partaken of it. The servants were seldom up at ten, and Matthews who rose between eleven and twelve „was esteemed a prodigy of early rising“.**)

§ XVIII.

(B. IV Ch. X. XIV.) In the tenth chapter begins again the acquaintance between Cadurcis; and Lady Annabel and her daughter, but a friendship is not renewed and justly repelled. In this we can call to mind the many things that have been written about the character of Byron, that he was distinguished „by an intense

*) Moore L. of B. (Murray 1860) P. 280.

**) Moore L. of B. (Murray 1860) P. 82.

sensibility of passion rather than affection". And bearing this in mind we are struck with the similarity between the model and the delineation. Cadurcis seeking at first to regain the respect and friendship of Lady Annabel which she adroitly but politely evaded. He is made to speak of despising the glitter and splendour of being the favourite of the public which he certainly at times did. He, meeting again Lady Annabel „had humbled himself before her; he had thrown with disdain at her feet all that dazzling fame and expanding glory which seemed his peculiar and increasing privilege". But all in vain: the woman who acted upon principle would not be moved, and then the mind of Cadurcis lacking stamina, like a ship without ballast, allows his feelings to be swayed in another direction, and in his bitter reflections he calls himself a slave, and the yielding in his youth to the good counsel of Lady Annabel, when all went well and all was sunshine he regrets, and considers it mechanical and servile submission. She on the other hand had read his character in his works, and had the same opinion which many entertain, of Byron that he was influenced by „a raging vanity, which she was convinced must prompt its owner to sacrifice, on all occasions, every feeling of duty to its gratification" and in this same strain she continued to judge of him. She was convinced that Cadurcis would form a bad husband for her Venetia, and this conviction runs through the whole. Having the real facts before us, that Byron's marriage was so unhappy that in a few months a separation was deemed advisable, we can only feel that the author has adroitly brought this incapacity to make a happy home prominently forward. That Lady Byron sent a solicitor and a doctor to his lordship to see if he were insane, which would have been one of the best excuses for claiming a separation, was probably for want of a better plea. It is not improbable that the fundamental cause lies in the traits of character which Disraeli has brought out in the summing up of Lady Annabel. He has also thrown in, as a passing scene, some portrayal of the caste-feeling which is sometimes ludicrous especially in English society, where there is really no ground to make any distinction. In showing forth the obedience of Venetia to her mother, in the hope that something would occur to bring about a reconciliation between Lady Annabel and Cadurcis, as well as her father, the sustained aversion of her mother for the latter, and the whole treatment of this part of the story shows the power of the author to make a tale interesting, without introducing strange and unheard of occurrences or descending to a style not sufficiently elevated for literature. The author sums

up the whole by presenting Lady Annabel drawing a parallel between her husband and what Cadurcis would become to Venetia, if they were to marry, which we can appreciate in the light of actual fact. She continues in her discourse with her daughter „He cannot have a heart. Spirits like him are heartless. It is another impulse that sways their existence. It is imagination; it is vanity;“*) And thus she continues embodying many of the thoughts and suggestions, which are more or less forcibly, given in the numerous works written upon the Life of the great poet; and the unenviable position of Lady Annabel „to find yourself the object of the world's curiosity — still worse their pity and, sympathy — — — — and be the grand subject of the pros and cons of every paltry journal“. It is observable, especially at this point in the narrative that as in the sacred writings in speaking of the very best of men Abraham, Moses, and David nothing is overdrawn, but even the gentle but strong minded Annabel Herbert reveals her weakness, as well as inexorable spirit, when meeting her Husband as related further on. The scene closes with a promise from Venetia to her mother, never to marry Cadurcis without the consent of the latter. The author by bringing the brilliant career of the once courted poet to a close through drowning, and then causing the cousin to be joined in matrimony to his heroine forms a turn to the story which is not usually given by novel writers, which does not naturally occur to the reader as a matter of course, or a thing which he expects before he has read half through the account: and precludes either the necessity of introducing another unhappy marriage, at the same time unduly lengthening his work; or ending with a happy union of Cadurcis, and the object of his admiration, which would be inconsistent with the tenor of the preceeding observations.

§ XIX.

(B. IV Ch. XVI XVIII XIX.) The step which Lady Monteagle took of dressing herself so curiously, and thus gaining admittance to Lord Cadurcis, is quite in conformity with the actions of some ladies under various circumstance, in England. She differs entirely from all the other persons introduced. The author having wisely excluded the marriage, which in the source from which he framed the main fabric of the novel, actually occurred and caused so

*) Vol. II p. 67 Jauch. Ed.

much scandal, ingeniously introduces the strange visitant, the duel which ensued, and the consequent uproar on his Lordship going to the House of Lords and returning. Disraeli is in his element when he dilates upon the injustice of public opinion, and the foolish one-sided views which are entertained. He was disposed to ride off over the opinions even of his party. This he did sometimes with right. For instance his taking with him the Treaty of Berlin, all arranged and settled in his pocket may be here mentioned. This act although spoken of by some in England with great indignation, was perfectly within the range of good order and justice. It no doubt also saved much time and expense, and produced a speedy and amicable settlement of the various points in dispute. In commenting upon the actions of the public, who went so far as to show their disapprobation by hissing Byron in the street, Disraeli quotes a paragraph from Macaulay's essay on Moore's Life of Byron; which although expressing truth, is written in rather a bitter strain, upon the follies of public opinion. Byron himself describes the outcry and adds that his friends advised him not to go to the theatre, because he would be hissed out; to abstain from Parliament, for if he did not the people would throw dirt on his carriage; and that on the day of his departure, his friends feared that the crowd around his house would do him some bodily injury. Medwin*) gives the words of Byron, when in Italy, and looking back upon the past and reflecting that even George Byron, his cousin, had been drawn from taking his part; they „hissed as I went to the House of Lords and insulted me in the streets so that I was afraid to go to the theatre whence the unfortunate Mrs. Mardyn had been driven with insult“. The author continues to apply the thoughts of Macaulay without using precisely his words. He no doubt considered that as so much had been written upon the subject, he could not do better than adapt it to his case. The real occurrences the author has developed into a history and graphically presented to our notice an exciting scene before the House, an opportunity for him to vent his feelings on a mob of the English populace in the words — „to see him thus assailed, with the savage execrations of all those vile things who exult in the fall of everything that is noble“. Macaulay's words on this subject are very similar though containing a comparison not reproduced.**)

*) Medwin Conv. of L. Byron P. 47.

**) Macaulay's Essays V ol I 314 Moore's L. of Byron.

of nobler natures, hastened to their repast." Disraeli has in many other instances borrowed thoughts and even words from the same author: compare. *) „But Lord Cadurcis had been guilty of the offence, which of all offences, is punished with severity — Lord Cadurcis had been overpraised“ in our author's account; and what Macaulay remarks; „He had been guilty of the offence, which of all offences is punished most severely — he had been everpraised“.**)

Therefore very many of the most beautiful allusious even if borrowed have embellishments of the author. The fact that Venetia when the duel and elopement were confirmed „instead of feeling indignation, she attributed what had occurred to the desperation of his mortified mind; and she visited on herself all the fatal consequences that had happened“. This is one of those beautiful and unusual touches so different from the effusions of a commonplace writer of works of fiction. The closing lines of this chapter are suggested by actual occurrences. Cadurcis shut himself up for a week and wrote a farewell to England. „It abounded in passages of overwhelming passion and almost satanic sarcasm. — It contained moreover a veiled address to Venetia delicate tender and irresistibly affecting“. In April of 1816 shortly after the unhappy separation from his wife, and the manifestations of public scorn which it aroused, Byron produced two poems: the one „A sketch“ to which the words of our author may justly be applied, „overwhelming passion, and almost satanic sarcasm“ on which opinions were divided. Even his friend Moore at first was inclined to follow those who looked upon it with indignation. There is in it no sign of repentance for a life of folly and dissipation, the true reason, perhaps the only reason for his separation, and for many of his troubles. For few men seem so throughout life to have, by their evil deeds touched the spring which immediately disengaged the rod of correction. Although we should not seek to exonerate Lady Byron from blame, we cannot wonder that this poem, emanating from the unhappy side of Byron's nature, called forth indignation. The other composition entitled „Fare Thee Well“ was so totally different, that the words referring in our story to Venetia, „delicate, tender, and irresistibly affecting“, are very appropriate. Moore's words respecting it are, „To many it appeared a strain of true conjugal tenderness, a kind of appeal, which no woman with a heart could resist.“***) Others had quite another

*) Vol. II 100 Jauch. Ed. B. IV Ch. XVIII.

**) Macaulay's Essays Vol. I P. 314 Jauch. Ed.

***) Moore L. of B. (1860) P. 302.

opinion, and affirmed that it was „a mere showy effusion of sentiment, as difficult for real feeling to have produced as it was easy for fancy and art“. None of these latter critics, however easy they might consider it, have produced such lines for instance as the fourth verse

„Though the world for this commend thee —
Though it smile upon the blow,
Even its praises must offend thee,
Founded on another's woe:“

Did we not know the truth respecting the fickleness of Lord Byron's character, perpetually „knowing the better, but following the worse“, and the subsequent course of his conduct, we might be led to feel with those who thought that such lines „no woman with a heart could resist“.

Moore adds, „The appearance of these poems gave additional violence to the angry and inquisitorial feeling“. The editors took advantage of the excitement by superposing the title „Poems by Lord Byron on his Domestic Circumstances“. Our author brings before us a scene very similar in its main points, but altered by the slightly different circumstances under which his hero bade adieu to England. He puts the two productions into one, describes them exactly and adds that the volume „was purchased with an avidity exceeding even the eagerness, with which his former productions had been received“. For though as Moore states the public were at first enraged, the remark of Macaulay is also appropriate that there was a reaction, and when far away they „wished to invite back the criminal whom they had just chased from them. His poetry became more popular than it had ever been; and his complaints were read with tears by thousands and tens of thousands who had never seen his face“. In the account before us, we have this desire to call him back expressed in the words. „Cadurcis, however was not to be conciliated. He left his native shores in a blaze of glory, but with the accents of scorn quivering on his lips.“

§ XX.

(B. V Ch. IV. VIII.) It is probable that the bold assertions of the Edinburgh Review refer very much to the chapters speaking of the travels in Italy, the meeting the father, and the letter which he afterwards caused to be presented by the Armenian monk in the words „Redundancies, extravagancies“. It must be owned that the emotions of the father on meeting his child are

feebly described, and rather verbose; and this is in some places the case, until the boating, and last sail on the sea, which latter is not only in its form, but even in its details and the expressions used, a copy of actual facts, and descriptions of what had really occurred. In fact the whole of this unborrowed part, although the incidents are interesting and well blended, lacks the graphic delineation as well as the raciness of many other parts of the work. But it must be remembered that although there is this scarcely disguised copying, there is a skill displayed in the arrangement and disposition of the whole narrative, concerning which the Edinburgh Review almost goes to the opposite extreme in the words „Erudite in conception“. Even in some instances where the words are borrowed as well as the scenes; the former are often rendered more forcible by a slight alteration by our author, and the latter are entirely embellished by his pen. So even if in this portion there may be some truth in the opinion that it is too „hasty in execution“, and we may look upon this as a weak point, the words used by the above mentioned periodical may we feel sure be applied to their own criticism. We are sure that this review, although like most which the Edinburgh Review produces is „Erudite in conception“, that it is „hasty in execution“ and in the conclusions it deduces, that if there are „Redundancies“, there are in it „extravagancies“ as to expression. Some passages at this stage of the story it must be admitted are well worded and affective such as „The daughter of my heart has found her sire“, „The father who has long lived upon her fancied image;“ A critic must have little knowledge of human nature, and the inexorable haughtiness and stubbornness of some women, when they have placed an ideal before them, which they consider in the slightest iota injured; if he fails to see the faithfulness of the portrayal of Lady Annabel at this juncture. It somewhat reminds us of Byron's accounts of Madame de Stael, only with other circumstances. It may possibly be urged of this part as has been done in the above mentioned medium, of the novel as a whole, that it is too dilated in its accounts. The mother holds out too long, and at last after she has even been willing to allow of a separation from her daughter, rather than return to her husband, passionately exclaims that she had better die than submit to a reconciliation. But if this be the case, it is not a very reprehensible error as a slight amount of dressing up of a narrative is not only allowable but even required in a work of fiction, and as for „extravagancies“ it will compare favourably with most of such works in this respect. Venetia meets her father in rather an

extraordinary manner, but not sufficiently so, to be at all inconsistent with possibility, or many of the more extraordinary occurrences of daily life. We must however own that this is in some respects the weakest portion of the narrative, but it contains much that is interesting and many passages are quite equal to those in the first volume. For instance the sixth chapter. The whole has also many redeeming qualities. It is not necessary to descant on the recurrence of pride to Lady Annabel so admirably portrayed in the closing words of the eighth chapter, and her interpretation of everything her daughter said according to her own bias; and the sustained characters in the whole, in verification of the approval expressed. It will be better to proceed to the concluding scenes which are like the first portion of the book made up from materials gathered from fact, but arranged according to the judgement and genius of the author, the characters, dispositions and fates of the persons delineated being so placed as best suited to the plot of the story.

§ XXI.

(B. VI Ch. II. III. IV. V.) Herbert accompanied by his wife and Venetia meets Cadurcis for the first time at Genoa by the sea. *) Byron for the first time met Shelley with his wife and a female relative at Geneva. Lord Byron had read some of the writings of Shelley. „There was therefore, on their present meeting at Geneva, no want of disposition towards acquaintance on either side, and an intimacy almost immediately sprung up between them“. **) Our author bearing this in mind makes his Lordship use the following words „Good God! have I, indeed the pleasure of seeing one I have so long admired?“ Herbert exclaims „Lord Cadurcis, is it Lord Cadurcis? This is a welcome meeting.“

Then Cadurcis says, in the course of conversation, „As for all things I wrote in England I really am ashamed of them“. — — — „I remember I made my heroines always wear turbans“ he tells Herbert that he gained all his orientalism from books. In several of Byron's letters to his mother, we have very similar expressions. From Athens of the 14. Jan. 1811 „Without losing sight of my own, I can judge of the countries and manners of others. — — — Now I might have stayed, smoked in your towns, or fogged in your country, a century, without being sure of this***)“.

*) Vol. II p. 212 Tauch. Ed.

**) Moore L. of B. P. 315 (1860).

***) Moore L. of B. (Ed by Murray 1860) P. 115.

Mr. D'Israeli the father of our author in his book entitled „The literary character“ mentions, some of the works which were suggested by Byron to whom he had lent his works and received them back with notes which he thus made use of. We find the poet referring to him as an author in a letter to Moore of the 12th. June 1815 — „but others opine that D'Israeli with whom he dined, knocked him down with his last publication ‘The Quarrels of Authors’ in a dispute about copyright*)“. Byron expressed his conviction that a short time spent in travelling would better fit him to write many of his descriptions than reading a great many books, and that a part of the education of youth should be, that a certain amount of time should be spent abroad. The author then brings out the gaiety of Lord Cadurcis, and those affable and pleasing qualities which were so prominent at certain times in the life of the poet, of whose correspondence Macaulay remarks that they are not merely valuable „on account of the information which they contain respecting the distinguished man by whom they were written, but on account also of their rare merit as compositions. The letters, at least those which were sent from Italy, are among the best in our language“. All this liveliness, powers of mimicry and talent for picturing as our author recounts, telling tales about pashas and eastern travels, were at the evenings spent with Shelley and the other friends engaged in taking off Polidori „an eccentric young man, whose vanity made him a constant butt for Lord Byron’s sarcasm and merriment“. Herbert was as astonished and delighted as Sir Walter Scott expresses himself to have been, and many others who if not in the same words, uttered the sentiments which Herbert felt „that he was by far the most hearty and amusing person he had ever known“. Different from what report had led him to picture as an „impassioned bard, pouring forth“ his eloquence „to an idolising world from whose applause“ he turned with misanthropic melancholy.

The next morning Cadurcis referred again to affairs in England the rage of the mob, and that „they all ran away from a drummer-boy and a couple of grenadiers“. The whole description is not only an opportunity for the conservative views of the author to find expression, but is entirely the case. It presents a true picture of an English uproar, the rage of the ruffians, despite their cowardice, and as the police are armed only with sticks and the military are few, such disturbances often take some time to put down.

*) Moore L. of B. P. 283.

Then we have Shelley and Byron under the names of Herbert and Lord Cadurcis conversing upon philosophical subjects. Like Shelley, Herbert abounds in the most imaginative and chimerical theories believing in the annihilation of death and the bringing in of immortality by a „silent and continuous operation of nature“ — — — „so that the inhabitants of the earth may attain a patriarchal age. This renovated breed may in turn produce a still more vigorous offspring“, and so on until we reach immortality. Byron in like manner is well depicted in Lord Cadurcis, making practical remarks. When Herbert spoke of all things changing, adding, „I doubt whether a man at fifty is the same material being that he is at five-and-twenty;“ Cadurcis replied „I wonder if a creditor brought an action against you at fifty for goods delivered at five-and-twenty, one could set up the want of identity as a plea in bar. It would be a consolation to an elderly gentleman“. In comparing the characters of the two friends Moore says „In Lord Byron, the real was never forgotten in the fanciful. — — — With Shelley it was far otherwise; — his fancy (and he had sufficient for a whole generation of poets) was the medium through which he saw all things*)“. The words which follow display in speaking of Shelley the character and general course of life of Herbert, „Having started as a teacher and reformer of the world at an age when he could know nothing of the world but from fancy, the persecution he met with — — — but confirmed him in his first paradoxical views of human ills and their remedies“.

Cadurcis acknowledges that he owed much to the perusal of Herberts works, a fact which is carried out through the whole tale, so we cannot say that at this particular juncture the thought is borrowed, but much was suggested to the author by actual fact. Shelley had sent to Byron a copy of his „Queen Mab“ long before they met on the lake of Geneva, and the latter had expressed his warm admiration of the opening lines, and probably this volume was like that of Herbert adorned with notes when his Lordship met the author. Moore notices, referring to the influence of the subtle philosopher „Here and there among those fine bursts of passion and description that abound in those canto of child Harold, may be discovered traces of that mysticism of meaning, — that sublimity, losing itself in its own vagueness, which so much characterised the writings of his extraordinary

*) Moore L. of B. (Murray 1860) P. 316.

friend“, and in one of the notes we find Shelley's favourite Pantheism of Love glanced at.)*

In the conversation with Venetia,**) Cadurcis says „I have such an extraordinary memory: I do not think I ever forgot anything“. They had been speaking of the happy days at Cherbury. The scenes of affection and pleasure experienced by Byron seemed fixed on his memory. Again to quote from Moore „— — — — while so little of his boyish correspondence has been preserved, there were found among his papers almost all the notes and letters which his principal school favourites — — — — — had ever addressed to him; and, in some cases, where the youthful writers had omitted to date their scrawls, his faithful memory had, at an interval of years, supplied the deficiency“.***)

Then the author tells of the intimacy of the two friends „the noble character, the vast knowledge, and refined taste of Herbert“. Cadurcis not having been a very great reader himself „liked the company of one whose mind was at once so richly cultured and so deeply meditative“. Being very similar to the words „The conversation of Mr. Shelley, from the extent of his poetic reading, and the strange mystic speculations into which his system of philosophy led him, was of a nature strongly to arrest and interest the attention of Lord Byron“.†)

In the course of conversation we find Herbert referring to Pope not as in a previous chapter Mr. Pole is represented as doing; but wondering that Cadurcis should be his votary. He mentions that which Macaulay expresses in his essay on Moore's Life of Lord Byron that the poetry of Pope is what the world generally „erroneously, in my opinion“ he adds „and from a confusion of ideas, esteems correct“. The same writer referring by name to Parnell, Addison, and Pope writes. „Ninety-nine persons out of a hundred would answer that the poetry of the last century was correct, but cold and mechanical.“

What our author causes Captain Cadurcis to remark about the letters of his cousin not only is very applicable to those of Byron, but many similar expressions have been used respecting them. He says „I do not think there is a more lively letter writer in the world! His descriptions are so vivid; a few touches give you a complete picture: and then his observations, they are so playful!“

*) Moore L. of B. (1860) P. 317.

**) B. VI ch. V.

***) Moore (1860) P. 24.

†) Moore (Murray 1860) L. of B. P. 316.

In the introduction of George Cadurcis the cousin of the young Lord the author not only brings before our notice a real personage, but does not, as in the other cases even veil this introduction in a fictitious name; for there was a George Byron, and he was a cousin to the poet, all thus far as in the tale. But the accounts agree in very little besides name and relationship. For George Cadurcis did not see his noble cousin until they were grown up when they became immediately like brothers while Byron's words are; „and lastly even my cousin George Byron who had been brought up with me, and whom I loved as a brother took my wife's part.“*) And of course as the circumstances were so different these words do not apply, nor those which follow „he shall never touch a sixpence of mine“. The two cousins are represented as friends until our author drowns Byron in the person of Cadurcis.

§ XXII.

(B. VI Ch. IX. XII.) As has already been remarked, the character, actions, and conversation of Herbert, and Lord Cadurcis at this stage of the story are borrowed from the accounts, and perhaps personal recitals of matters connected with Shelley and Byron. The ages are reversed, for the former was not like Herbert a man in middle life, but four years younger than his illustrious companion, although like Herbert in many other respects, described by Moore as „An aristocrat by birth, and“, he adds „as I understand, also in appearance and manners, he was yet a leveller in politics“. Both accounts agree in the fact that the two friends spent a good deal of time in boating, in the real history on the Lake of Geneva, in our romance on the Mediterranean off Genoa. The reports of the sailors that Cadurcis so well understood the management of a boat are also applicable, for Shelley and Byron bought a boat with a sail,**) the only one with a proper keel which, with the expertness of the owners astonished the sailors. The description of the rising of the storm, and a white squall in the Mediterranean, and the experienced captain hurrying the steps of Venetia, and wishing he had been with them, is so short and couched in such simple words that I think even the writers to the Edinburgh Review could not apply the term „pretentious“, to it. At the same time the whole is so vividly brought before us that we fancy we can see the water and the gathering cloud,

*) Medwin Jour. of Conv. of Lord Byron P. 47.

**) Moore L. of B. P. 319 (Ed. 1860).

the valley, with the mountains around, and the two figures hurrying on. When Venetia in a state of suspense takes up the volume of her father's poems, which Cadurcis had filled with his notes": the thought which the author proposes is expressed so simply and is yet so applicable and touching under the circumstances. He observes, „How little did Plantagenet anticipate, when he thus expressed at Athens the passing impressions of his mind, that ere a year had glided away, his fate would be so intimately blended with that of Herbert!"

The account of the two being drowned is taken from fact and the place of the event nearly coincides with the original. Byron wrote from Pisa on the 8. Aug. 1822 to Moore „You will have heard by this time that Shelley and another gentleman (Captain Williams) were drowned about a month ago (a month yesterday) in a squall off the Gulf of Spezia.“*) This is just what our author describes: two gentlemen out in a boat between Spezia and Genoa; a squall suddenly coming on, and as suddenly abating. Of course there is the filling up of the narrative, the anxiety of those left at home, which is certainly not over-drawn or theatrically given, but easily and well handled, and not inferior to the earlier chapters of the first volume, or those which comprehend the description of Lady Monteagle. It certainly cannot be admitted that these parts were hurriedly and carelessly written. However many of the circumstances described coincide with another account in which Byron and Shelley were together in a boat at the Lake of Geneva. The description of the immediate rise of the squall is as follows in „Venetia“. „A white mist began to curl above the horizon, the blueness of the day seemed suddenly to fade, and its colour became grey; there was a swell on the waters that hitherto had been quite glassy, and they were covered with a scurfy foam.“**) Shelley's words are „The wind gradually increased in violence until it blew tremendously, and as it came from the remotest extremity of the Lake, produced waves of a frightful height, and covered the whole surface with a chaos of foam“.***) The former description is perhaps the most perfect in many respects although our author was not an eye-witness. He narrates „Lord Cadurcis was a fine swimmer, and had evidently made strong efforts for his life, for he was partly undressed“. Moores words are; „In the squall off Meillerie which he mentions,

*) Moore L. of B. (Ed. of 1860) P. 563.

**) V. ol II p. 266 Tauch. Ed.

***) Moore L. of B. (Murray 1860) P. 320.

their danger was considerable. In the expectation every moment of being obliged to swim for his life, Lord Byron had already thrown off his coat." It is well known also that Byron was „a fine swimmer“. Disraeli writes thus of the other personage in the boat „It would appear that he had made no struggle to save himself for his hand was locked in his waistcoat, where, at the moment he had thrust the Phaedo, showing that he had been reading to the last, and was meditating on immortality when he died“. And in Moore's description we have very similar words. Shelley refusing the offer of Byron to help him if there should be occasion, „seating himself quietly upon a locker, and grasping the rings at each end firmly in his hands, declared his determination to go down in that position without a struggle“.

§ XXIII.

If the course of the story had only permitted, it would have enhanced its value if the generosity of Byron had been more brought out, of which so many instances are given in the works devoted to exhibiting his life, although it cannot be maintained that this quality redeems an ill-spent life. His deeds of humanity and courage are still more to be commended, especially in Greece, some of which Dr. Bruno minutely describes.*)

Most people, in this enlightened age would rather judge of the life of Byron with the mournfully philosophy of Heraclitus, than that of Democritus; although we may to some extent apply the words of Macaulay in his „Life of Charles II“ (History of England) that having learned the worst side of human-nature; neither prosperity nor adversity was able to produce any improvement in him.

*) „Inseguendo un giorno un corsaro Greco, una nave carica di Turchi uno di essi — — — —, cadde in mare, e gli riuscì di portarsi a terra nuotando. — — — —; la fortuna volle che il Turco fuggisse appunto nella casa d'abitazione di Milord — — — —: giunti i due soldati Greci, chiedono furibondi coll' armi alla mano — — — — la restituzione della loro preda — — — — Milord gli offre qual somma volessero per riscattare il Turco; ma i due soldati insistono colle armi in atto di ferire, a voler il prigioniero per ammazzarlo; allora Milord rispose, giacchè è così, me piuttosto ammazzerete che quel povero infelice perisca! — — — — lo fece curare dal suo medico — — — — e poi caricatolo di doni, lo mandò a Patrasso — — — — Aveva Milord pure raccolto in Messolonghi una donna Turca colla di lei figlia, che dall' apice de la fortuna si trovavano nella piu grande miseria. Fece dei ricchissimi doni all figlia ancor bambina, ed aveva divisato di manderla educare in Italia — — — — —.

Although „The Times“ which medium it is well known is always with the winning party, disparaged the labours of Byron in Greece, the proclamation issued on the 7. April 1824 in Greece attests the appreciation by the Greeks of the selfdenial and generosity of their leader. One clause is specially to this effect that all know how full he was of desire for doing good to all around him and none will cease to mention his name and fame as a benefactor. The ode which appeared in a Greek journal, of which a translation in „The Literary Gazette“ is in many lines rather freely translated, in a few more literally, shows the feelings of the Greeks themselves.

However if the author had brought these things forward he must materially have changed the whole plot, of his story: and therefore he has given a general notion of the character of Byron.

The peculiarities of Shelley, his poetry and philosophy are not very perfectly brought before our notice. Some thoughts are introduced partially derived from his poetry, especially from the very beautiful verses on „Love's Philosophy“. He never attained equal fame with Byron; and although his numbers are defective, and the metre often entirely neglected; there is such a flow and sweetness in the words, and beauty of expression that it must be admitted that it contains the true essentials of poetry, though requiring a little management in reading; and of course is far superior to much of the more correct rhyming. „The Quarterly review“ which Byron says shines in that art which is so common to reviewers, in depreciating a work without giving any quotations. compared Shelley to Pharaoh, and his works to his chariot wheels for what reason we cannot tell.

Our author has therefore brought out the salient points of the character of Byron, and introduced Shelley according to his own moulding, as an adjunct.

Although this novel is not regarded as the best of Disraeli's I feel no hesitation in giving it no inconsiderable meed of praise, feeling assured that if we admit novels to have a beneficial influence on mankind, my so doing will apply rather to the first clause of the saying of the Philosopher Democritus in his terse remarks upon praise and blame; (*Εὐλογεῖν ἐπὶ καλοῦσι ἔργμασι καλόν· τὸ γὰρ ἐπὶ φλαύροισι κιβδήλον καὶ ἀπατεῶνος.*) than to the second.

Life.

I, Herbert Bruce Hamilton was born on the 3th. Nov. ~~1884~~ (1) in Lynn Regis. At the age of four my parents removed to London and there sent me to the Revd. Mr. Stuart's school. Afterwards in Brighton I attended successively the schools of Mr. Andrews F. C. P. and Mr. Peto, in both of which Latin, Greek, modern languages &c were taught. In the year 1867 I went to Heidelberg and studied there during two terms, Chemistry and Physics. Having in Leipzig during five terms heard the lectures of Professors König, Wülcker, Eckstein, Lange, Curtius, Lipsius, Delitzsch, Guthe, and Voigt it affords me pleasure to acknowledge the benefit which I have derived especially from the instructions of Professors Wülcker, Delitzsch, and Guthe.

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